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Silent Era Adaptations of 19th and Early 20th Century Gothic Novels with a Special Emphasis on Psychological and Aesthetic Interpretations of the Monster Figure

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Abstract

My research is centred around Silent Era films adapted from nineteenth and early twentieth century Gothic literature with a special emphasis on the figure of the monster and its translation from literary to cinematic form. The corpus I have assembled for the purposes of this analysis comprises sixty-six films made in ten different countries between 1897 and 1929. Many of these films are considered lost and I have endeavored to reconstruct them as much as possible using materials located in film archives. The Introduction lays out the ground covered in the thesis and provides a working definition of ‘monstrosity’ in this context. The first chapter deals with the historical, economic, cultural, social and technological contexts of the films under discussion. The second chapter approaches the eight literary monster figures who form the core of this thesis through the lens of Adaptation Theory. The third chapter examines the elements of cinematic language that were particularly relevant to translating monster characters and Gothic literary narratives into silent film, placing this corpus into the context of silent film history and theory. The fourth chapter reviews a cross-section of intermedial systems of classification that have been applied to monster figures, and proposes a new system that would reflect the multifarious nature of the silent film Gothic literary monster. Chapters Five through Nine offer a theoretical framework for classifying the principal characteristics of the silent film Gothic monster by applying various philosophical and aesthetic concepts. The final chapter summarises the material presented in earlier chapters and offers relevant conclusions demonstrating how these films employ the unique characteristics, conventions, and limitations of the silent film medium in their representations of the Gothic literary monster.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	1
Acknowledgements.....	5
Captions for Illustrations	6
Introduction.....	13
Silent Cinema and the Gothic	14
A Working Definition of the Monster	23
Thesis Structure and Outline	32
Chapter I - The Silent Film Monster in Socio-Political and Cultural Context	36
The Influence of World War I, Medical Advances and Eugenics	40
Influences of Other Arts	48
Chapter II - Literary Archetypes of Silent Era Monsters.....	67
II.1. Jekyll and Hyde.....	70
II.2. Dracula	74
II.3. Erik, the Phantom of the Opera.....	84
II.4. Quasimodo	91
II.5. Roderick Usher	96
II.6. Gwynplaine	102
II.7. Orlac.....	109
II.8. Frankenstein's Creature.....	116
Chapter III - The Cine-Literary Monster and the Language of Silent Film.....	125
III.1. Composition, Framing, and Camera Angles	128
III.2. Lighting Design	136
III.3. Editing	139
III.4. Special Effects	142
III.5. Set, Costume, and Makeup Design.....	155
III.6. Gestural Language	167
Chapter IV - The Duality of the Silent Film Monster	174
IV.1. Major Characteristics of the Silent Film Monster and the Challenge of Classification	174
IV.2. Theories of the Double and the Other as Applicable to the Monster Figure.....	181
IV.3. Manifestations of Monstrous Duality in Silent Film.....	185
<i>IV.3.1. Split Monster: The Monster's Multiple "Creative" Bodies</i>	<i>185</i>

IV.3.2. <i>Romantic Monster: Duality Expressed Through Romantic Subplots</i>	193
IV.3.3. <i>The Monster's Body as Doppelgänger</i>	195
IV.3.4. <i>Duality Through Intertextual and Mythological Reference</i>	203
IV.3.5. <i>Duality Through the Inorganic Body</i>	209
IV.3.6. <i>The Mirror</i>	215
IV.3. Doubling the Void: The Monster and the Embodiment of Lack	221
Chapter V - Types of Monstrous Deformity in Silent Film, Their Mechanics and Symbolism	227
V.1. Deformed Bodies	227
V.1.1. <i>The Dwarf</i>	228
V.1.2. <i>The Hunchback</i>	232
V.1.3. <i>The "Limper"</i>	237
V.1.4. <i>The Horrific Face: Gaping Mouths, Evil Eyes and Missing Noses</i>	245
V.2. The Symbolism of Monstrous Deformity	259
V.2.1. <i>The Deformed Monster as Criminal/Villain</i>	259
V.2.2. <i>The Deformed Monster as Genius/Superman</i>	268
V.2.3. <i>Deformity as Spectacle: "Freakery"</i>	273
V.2.4. <i>Deformity as Signifier of Sexual Deviance</i>	280
V.2.5. <i>The "Impossible Real" Monster</i>	284
Chapter VI - The Architectural Monster	293
VI.1. Definition of the Architectural Monster	293
VI.2. Specificity of the Monstrous Environment in Silent Film	294
VI.3. Architecture as Monster	296
VI.3.1. <i>Architectural Styles as Uncanny, "Immoral," "Monstrous," "Repulsive," and "Plainly Wrong"</i>	296
VI.3.2. <i>Mapping the Monster's Consciousness Onto Architecture Through the Language of Silent Film</i>	301
VI.3.3. <i>Architecture as Character: The Personification of Architectural Environments</i>	310
VI.4. The Monster as Architecture	312

<i>VI.4.1. The Symbiosis of Organic Body and Inorganic Environment</i>	312
<i>VI.4.2. The Monster's Body as Architecture</i>	314
<i>VI.4.3. The Theory of "Photogenie" and Erasing the Distinction Between Animate and Inanimate Entities</i>	320
VI.5. Demonic Spaces	323
<i>VI.5.1. The Interior as Space for Subjective Meaning</i>	324
<i>VI.5.2. The Exterior as Monstrous Universe and Place of Rejection</i>	334
<i>VI.5.3. The Dualistic Wall: Transgressing Boundaries Between Interior and Exterior</i>	339
Chapter VII - Monstrous Hybridity and the Fear of Science	343
VII.1. Devolution and Mutation - The Monster as Grotesque Animal Hybrid	344
VII.2. The Monster as Scientist and as Victim of Scientific Progress	350
Chapter VIII - The De-Monstrification of the Silent Film Monster	361
VIII.1. Preproduction: Casting the Monster	362
<i>VIII.1.1. Persona and Public Image</i>	362
<i>VIII.1.2. Theatrical Background</i>	363
<i>VIII.1.3. Romanticised Type Casting</i>	367
<i>VIII.1.4. Age</i>	370
VIII.2. Screenplay: Romantic Subplots	373
Conclusion	377
Works Cited	385
Filmography	400
Appendix – Charts	406

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Captions for Illustrations

- Figure 1: Emil Jannings as Mephisto in *Faust* (UFA 1926), Directed by F.W. Murnau. Film frame. 39
- Figure 2: WWI soldier with porcelain face mask designed by sculptor Anna Coleman Ladd, circa 1920. 41
- Figure 3: Publicity still showing Lon Chaney's makeup as Quasimodo in 1923's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Universal), directed by Wallace Worsley..... 42
- Figure 4: Claustrophobic set design in *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Decla-Bioscop 1919), directed by Robert Wiene. Publicity still obtained from the Filmmuseum-Berlin/Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek. 44
- Figure 5: From left to right – Eugene Talbot's sketch of a dolicocephalic skull as a possible indicator of 'degeneracy'; Cesare Lombroso's sketch of a 'Criminal's Ear'; Eugene Talbot's sketch of a jaw with supernumerary and 'primitive' conical teeth. 47
- Figure 6: Title page for an 1898 edition of "The Vampire." Poem by Rudyard Kipling (1897), original painting *The Vampire*, by Sir Philip Burne-Jones, 1897, oil on canvas..... 50
- Figure 7: Original cover from penny dreadful *Varney the Vampire or the Feast of Blood* by James Malcolm Rymer and Thomas Peckett Prest (serialised 1845-47 in the United Kingdom). 51
- Figure 8: Fragmentation in painting: Pablo Picasso, *Portrait of Ambroise Vollard* (1910), Pushkin Museum of Fine Art, Moscow..... 53
- Figure 9: Fragmentation in film: *Fall of the House of Usher* (1928), directed by Melville Webber and James S. Watson. Screen grab taken by author..... 53
- Figure 10: Otto Dix, *War Cripples*, 1920, oil on canvas. Lost, presumed destroyed. 54
- Figure 11: Set design for a 1924 New York production of *The Miracle* directed by Max Reinhardt at the Century Theatre in New York where it ran from 15 January 1924 to 10 November 1925. 58
- Figure 12: Max Beckmann, *Die Nacht (The Night)*, oil on canvas, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Dusseldorf. 61
- Figure 13: Karl Jacob Hirsch, *Aufschrei*, woodcut (1919). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York..... 61

Figure 14: Expressionist-influenced set design in <i>The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari</i> (Wiene, 1919). Publicity still. Murnau-Stiftung.	62
Figure 15: “Exact Air,” from Le Corbusier’s <i>Radiant City</i> (1930), drawing.	63
Figure 16: Publicity still showing set design in <i>Metropolis</i> (UFA 1927), directed by Fritz Lang	64
Figure 17: Poster for <i>Drakula halála (Dracula’s Death)</i> (1921), directed by Károly Lajthay. Lost film.....	77
Figure 18: Poster for <i>Nosferatu</i> (Jofa-Atelier Berlin-Johannisthal, Prana-Film GmbH 1922), directed by F.W. Murnau. Poster designed by Albin Grau, 1922. Copy acquired by author from the Deutsches Kinemathek.	77
Figure 19: Poster for <i>The Phantom of the Opera</i> (Universal 1925), directed by Rupert Julian.	86
Figure 20: Poster for <i>Life Without Soul</i> (Ocean Film Corporation 1915), directed by Joseph W. Smiley. Lost film.	119
Figure 21: Example of a theatrical composition in <i>Das Grinsende Gesicht (The Grinning Face)</i> (Olympic Films 1921), directed by Julius Herzka. Publicity still. Copy obtained by author from the Deutsches Kinemathek, Berlin.	130
Figure 22: A dynamic composition in <i>The Man Who Laughs</i> (Universal 1929), directed by Paul Leni. Conrad Veidt as Gwynplaine and Olga Baclanova as Duchess Josiana. Publicity still.	131
Figure 23: POV shots in <i>The Man Who Laughs</i> (Leni, 1929). Josiana (Olga Baclanova) and Gwynplaine (Conrad Veidt) observe one another. Screen grabs taken by author.....	133
Figure 24: Gina (Nita Naldi) shown through Jekyll (John Barrymore)’s POV in <i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i> (Paramount 1920), directed by John S. Robertson. Screen grabs taken by author.....	135
Figure 25: Erik (Lon Chaney) in the masquerade scene, shot in two-colour Technicolor, from <i>The Phantom of the Opera</i> (Julian, 1925). Screen grab taken by author.....	137
Figure 26: Superimpositions in <i>La Chute de la Maison Usher</i> (Films Jean Epstein 1928), directed by Jean Epstein, Marguerite Gance as Madeline Usher. Screen grab taken by author.....	145

Figure 27: Multiple exposures used in a nightmare sequence in <i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i> (Robertson, 1920). John Barrymore as Jekyll and as illusory tarantula/Hyde. Screen grab taken by author.	146
Figure 28; Double exposure used to create an apparition in <i>Orlacs Hande</i> (Berolina Film GmbH 1924), directed by Robert Wiene, starring Conrad Veidt. Screen grab taken by author.	147
Figure 29: “False superimposition” used in a nightmare sequence in <i>Der Januskopf</i> (Decla-Bioscop AG 1920), directed by F.W. Murnau, starring Conrad Veidt. Lost film. Publicity still.	148
Figure 30: The phantom forest sequence in <i>Nosferatu</i> (Murnau, 1922). Screen grab taken by author.	149
Figure 31: Fragmentation and deconstruction in <i>The Fall of the House of Usher</i> (Watson and Webber, 1928). Hildegard Watson as Madeline Usher. Screen grab taken by author.	152
Figure 32: James Cruze as Hyde in <i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i> (Thanhouser Film Corporation 1912), directed by Lucius Henderson. Screen grab taken by author.	156
Figure 33: Publicity stills of John Barrymore as Jekyll and Hyde in <i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i> (Robertson, 1920),	157
Figure 34: Alwin Neuß as Hyde in <i>Ein Seltsamer Fall</i> (Vitascope GmbH 1914), directed by Max Mack. Lost film. Copy of publicity still acquired by author from the Deutsches Kinemathek.	158
Figure 35: Herbert Stern’s makeup as Roderick Usher (top) and Melville Webber’s makeup as the visitor (bottom) in <i>The Fall of the House of Usher</i> (Watson and Webber, 1928). Screen grabs taken by author.	160
Figure 36: Subtle makeup design in Jean Epstein’s <i>La Chute de la Maison Usher</i> (1928). Jean Debucourt as Roderick Usher (top) and Charles Lamy as the visitor (bottom). Screen grabs taken by author.	161
Figure 37: Approaches to historical costume design. Top: <i>Das Grinsende Gesicht</i> (Herzka, 1921). Publicity still. Copy obtained by author from the Deutsches Kinemathek, Berlin.) Bottom: <i>The Man Who Laughs</i> (Leni, 1929). Film frame.	163

Figure 38: Expressive gestural language in <i>La Chute de la Maison Usher</i> (Epstein, 1928). Jean Debucourt as Roderick and Charles Lamy as the visitor. Screen grab taken by author.	168
Figure 39: Lon Chaney's gestural style as Erik in <i>The Phantom of the Opera</i> (Julian, 1925). Mary Philbin as Christine. Publicity still.	170
Figure 40: Conrad Veidt and his hands in <i>Orlacs Hände</i> (Wiene, 1924). Publicity still.	197
Figure 41: Close-up of Roderick (Jean Debucourt)'s hands from <i>La Chute de la Maison Usher</i> (Epstein, 1928). Screen grab taken by author.	200
Figure 42: Conrad Veidt's gestural language in <i>Orlacs Hände</i> (Wiene, 1924). Screen grabs taken by author.	201
Figure 43: Conrad Veidt's gestural language as Gwynplaine in <i>The Man Who Laughs</i> (Leni, 1929). Screen grabs taken by author.	202
Figure 44: The subterranean river crossing in <i>The Phantom of the Opera</i> (Julian, 1925). Film frame.	207
Figure 45: Caspar David Friedrich, <i>The Abbey In the Oakwood</i> (1810). Oil on canvas.	211
Figure 46: Count Orlock's castle in <i>Nosferatu</i> (Murnau, 1922). Screen grab taken by author.	211
Figure 47: Count Orlock (Max Schrek)'s shadow in <i>Nosferatu</i> (Murnau, 1922). Screen grab taken by author.	212
Figure 48: Erik (Lon Chaney)'s shadow in <i>The Phantom of the Opera</i> (Julian, 1925). Screen grab taken by author.	214
Figure 49: Gwynplaine (Conrad Veidt) and his mirror in <i>The Man Who Laughs</i> (Leni, 1929). Screen grab taken by author.	218
Figure 50: Josiana (Olga Baclanova)'s mirror reflection in <i>The Man Who Laughs</i> (Leni, 1929). Screen grab taken by author.	219
Figure 51: Frankenstein (Augustus Phillips) sees the Creature (Charles Stanton Ogle) as his mirror image in <i>Frankenstein</i> (Edison Manufacturing Company 1910), directed by J. Searle Dawley. Screen grab taken by author.	220
Figure 52: Richard Mansfield as both Jekyll and Hyde in the 1887 Thomas Russell Sullivan theatrical production. Cabinet card.	230

Figure 53: Lon Chaney's extreme full-body makeup as Quasimodo in <i>The Hunchback of Notre Dame</i> (Worsley, 1923). Publicity still.	235
Figure 54: Gestural "types" in <i>Notre Dame de Paris</i> (Pathé Frères 1911), directed by Albert Capellani. Henri Krauss as Quasimodo, Stacia Napierkowska as Esmeralda, and Claude Garry as Frollo. Lost film. Publicity still.	240
Figure 55: Expressing emotional disturbance through gesture and expression - Conrad Veidt in <i>Orlacs Hände</i> (Wiene, 1924). Screen grab taken by author..	244
Figure 56: Conrad Veidt's makeup as Gwynplaine in <i>The Man Who Laughs</i> (Leni, 1929). Screen grab taken by author.....	249
Figure 57: Franz Höbbling (Gwynplaine), Lucienne Delacroix (Dea), and Franz Weißmüller (Ursus) in <i>Das Grinsende Gesicht</i> (Herzka, 1921). Publicity still. Copy obtained by author from the Deutsches Kinemathek, Berlin.	251
Figure 58: Publicity photo of John Barrymore's makeup as "Gwymplaine" in the play <i>Clair de Lune</i> by Michael Strange, which debuted on Broadway in 1921.	252
Figure 59: Left: Headshot of actor Lon Chaney. Right: Lon Chaney as Erik in <i>The Phantom of the Opera</i> (Julian, 1925). Publicity still.	256
Figure 60: Gothic architecture used as a signifier of evil/danger in <i>The Hunchback of Notre Dame</i> (Worsley, 1923). Film frame.	298
Figure 61: Erik's underground realm as a mythological Netherworld in <i>The Phantom of the Opera</i> (Julian, 1925). Screen grab taken by author.	301
Figure 62: The scale replica of the Paris Opera built at Universal Studios for <i>The Phantom of the Opera</i> (Julian, 1925) with structural modifications to accommodate lighting rigs and camera angles.....	305
Figure 63: Production still showing set under construction for <i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i> (Robertson, 1920).	306
Figure 64: Production still showing the exterior of the Notre Dame Cathedral set constructed for Universal's <i>The Hunchback of Notre Dame</i> (Worsley, 1923) and briefly featured in the final chase sequence in <i>The Phantom of the Opera</i> (Julian, 1925).....	307
Figure 65: Elaborate interiors and dramatic lighting in <i>The Hunchback of Notre Dame</i> (Worsley, 1923). Lon Chaney as Quasimodo and Nigel De Brulier as	

Claude Frollo. Publicity still.	308
Figure 66: Quasimodo (Lon Chaney) fusing with the architecture of the Cathedral in <i>The Hunchback of Notre Dame</i> (Worsley, 1923). Screen grabs taken by author.	315
Figure 67: Dracula/Count Orlock (Max Schrek) framed by architectural elements in <i>Nosferatu</i> (Murnau, 1922). Screen grabs taken by author.	317
Figure 68: Count Orlock (Max Schrek) and the rigging of the <i>Demeter</i> in <i>Nosferatu</i> (Murnau, 1922). Screen grab taken by author.	318
Figure 69: Prisms, editing and set design creating a dematerialised environment in <i>The Fall of the House of Usher</i> (Watson and Webber, 1928). Hildegard Watson as Madeline. Screen grab taken by author.	322
Figure 70: Hidden layers of meaning and symbolism explored through closeups in <i>La Chute de la Maison Usher</i> (Epstein, 1928). Screen grab taken by author.	323
Figure 71: The laboratory set in <i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i> (Henderson, 1912). James Cruze as Jekyll. Screen grab taken by author.	325
Figure 72: The ominous laboratory set in John S. Robertson's <i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i> (1920). John Barrymore as Jekyll. Screen grab taken by author.	327
Figure 73: Conrad Veidt as Dr. Warren/Dr. Jekyll (top) and as Mr. O'Connor/Mr. Hyde (bottom) in <i>Der Januskopf</i> (Murnau, 1920). Lost film. Publicity stills.	329
Figure 74: The catacombs in <i>The Phantom of the Violin</i> (Universal 1914), directed by Francis Ford. Francis Ford as Ellis and Grace Cunrad as Rosa. Lost film. Publicity still.	331
Figure 75: A rural landscape reflecting the vampire's sinister influence in <i>Nosferatu</i> (Murnau, 1922). Greta Schröder as Ellen/Mina. Screen grab taken by author.	338
Figure 76: Max Schrek's makeup as Count Orlock/Dracula in <i>Nosferatu</i> (Murnau, 1922). Screen grab taken by author.	348
Figure 77: Publicity still of Paul Askonas as Drakula in <i>Drakula halála</i> (Lajthay, 1921).	349
Figure 78: One of the few existing images of Umberto Guarracino as the Creature in <i>Il Mostro Di Frankenstein</i> (Albertini Film 1920), directed by Eugenio Testa. Lost film. Publicity still from 1920 poster.	354
Figure 79: Publicity still of Charles Stanton Ogle as the Creature in <i>Frankenstein</i>	

(Dawley, 1910).....	356
Figure 80: The deranged Drakula (Paul Askonas) menacing Mary/Mina (Margit Lux) in <i>Drakula halála</i> (Lajthay, 1921). Lost film. Publicity still.	359
Figure 81: Headshot of actor Max Schrek, devoid of vampiric makeup.....	363
Figure 82: Conrad Veidt in Oscar Wilde's <i>Salome</i> in the Koniggratzerstrasse, Berlin, 1921. From Getty Images (http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/).....	364
Figure 83: Publicity photo of John Barrymore as Hamlet in a 1922 production at the Sam H. Harris Theatre, New York.....	365
Figure 84: Universal Studios postcard of actor Frank Keenan.....	368
Figure 85: Jekyll (James Cruze) shares a romantic moment with his sweetheart (Florence La Badie) minutes before murdering her father as Hyde in <i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i> (Henderson, 1912). Screen grab taken by author.....	374

Introduction

The main aim of this thesis is to assemble and analyse a comprehensive corpus of Silent Era monster films comprising well-known classics alongside lesser known and lost films. My argument throughout is that in complex dialogue with traditional Gothic themes and imagery all of these films feature what can best be characterised as a distinctive 'psychological' approach to the representation of monstrous beings and their environments in cinema, as distinct from many later sound-era representations of monstrosity as often de-psychologized. This said, many of the films to be analysed exerted a clear and powerful influence on later sound-era horror and Gothic cinema with respect to settings, cinematic techniques, casting decisions, makeup and special effects, and other narrative and formal aspects; an influence that can still be observed today. Through my analysis a new definition of the Gothic silent film monster will emerge as a first step in defining the 'Silent Gothic film' as a plausible and hitherto unrecognised historical, stylistic and thematic category of cinematic production.

My research focuses on Silent Era films that were adapted from nineteenth and early twentieth century Gothic literature, with a special emphasis on the figure of the monster and its translation from literary to cinematic form. The literary works are American, French and British, and range in publication date from 1808 to 1920. The cinematic adaptations are all European and American silent films made between 1897 and 1929. My research concentrated on silent films that engaged with a pre-1920 literary work of the Gothic genre featuring a dominant anti-heroic figure - a monster - as the central character. I have compiled a corpus of sixty-six known film adaptations of eight literary works shot in ten different countries. Some of these films

are considered lost and I have endeavoured to reconstruct them as much as possible for purposes of analysis using materials located in film archives. The specific archives I have consulted in the course of my research are: the Deutsche Kinemathek (Film Archive, Photo Archive, Costume/Set Design Archive, and Scripts, Gray Literature and Audio Documents Archive); Filmarchiv Austria; Munich Film Museum; American Film Institute; British Film Institute; The Universal Studios Archives; The George Eastman House Archives; Museum of Modern Art New York Film Archive; Progressive Silent Film List; Hungarian Film Institute; Cinémathèque Française; Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv; Danske Filminstitut; Thanouser Company Film Preservation Online Archive; UCLA Film and Television Archive; Swedish Film Institute; Producers Library Online Archive; Deutsches Filminstitut; and the Library of Congress, Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division.

Silent Cinema and the Gothic

My corpus is discussed in terms of subject matter and literary and cinematic style. In relation to subject and theme, the primary unifying feature of the literary sources is their belonging to the Gothic genre. It should be noted that the term “Gothic” is a highly dynamic one, the definition of which has fluctuated greatly over time and in different scholarly and artistic contexts. From its earliest critical applications, it has been associated with the forms and perceptions of Medieval Gothic art, architecture, culture and society, along with related notions of darkness, barbarity, superstition, and architectural ‘excess’. This usage is traceable to the 16th

century writings of Giorgio Vasari and has been echoed repeatedly by later scholars of art and literature.¹ Originally deriving from the name of the Germanic tribes (the Goths) who contributed to the fall of the Roman Empire and the classical civilisation it represented, the term gradually lost its geographical connotations to become, by the 18th century, associated with a generalised historical period. According to Punter and Byron, “‘Gothic’ broadened out to become descriptive of anything medieval” or preceding the middle of the seventeenth century. It came to represent the tension between a perceived orderly, enlightened, rule-governed “classical” aesthetic and the chaotic, uncivilised, darker, exaggerated “Gothic” period, which “constantly tended to overflow cultural boundaries.”² Up to the present time the term “Gothic” has been applied in a staggering range of contexts and disciplines including but not limited to history, art history, architecture, literature, film, cultural studies, feminist studies, horror studies, and new media.³

Its specific application to literature is commonly traced to Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), a template and inspiration for later 18th century writers such as Ann Radcliffe, Matthew Lewis, William Beckford and many others.⁴ The late 18th century wave of Gothic literature was dominated by female-centred narratives, written by women, with female characters, for female audiences and exploring issues related to the role of women in society and in the family (with the obvious exception

¹ Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, trans. Jonathan Foster (London: H.G. Bohn, 1850).

² David Punter and Glennis Byron, eds. *The Gothic* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2004) 7.

³ For a recent discussion of the term ‘Gothic’ and its evolving meanings in various media, see the articles collected in: Anna Kedra-Kardela and Andrzej Sławomir Kowalczyk, eds. *Expanding the Gothic Canon: Studies in Literature, Film and New Media*, (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2014).

⁴ Matthew G. Lewis, *Ambrosio, or The Monk: a Romance* (London: printed for J. Bell, 1798); William Beckford, *Vathek, An Arabian tale*, trans. Samuel Henley (London: printed for J. Johnson, 1786).

of Lewis and Beckford).⁵ In the 19th century, the literary Gothic became generally more psychological and interior-facing often centred around an individualist, male figure who is in some way on the fringe of acceptable society or at odds with it.⁶ Rather than straightforward villains these are antiheroes whose motives and behaviour are more ambivalent and multi-dimensional, and greater insight is provided into their conflicted feelings and psychology. The central themes of 19th century Gothic novels - insanity, duality/split personality, remorse, vengeance, rebellion, despair, and isolation – were profoundly influential in early 20th century culture and art including its more popular and mass media forms.. Mary Shelley and later writers such as Robert Louis Stevenson and H.G. Wells diversified the genre further by fusing traditional Gothic elements with references to scientific exploration, while the Victorian Gothic wave added the element of domestication, setting its narratives in modern times and familiar settings. The group of works classified by some scholars as the “American Gothic” and exemplified by the writings of Edgar Allen Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Robert W. Chambers, Ambrose Bierce, Henry James’s *Turn of the Screw*, and later H.P. Lovecraft, combine the traditions of the European Gothic with the cultural, historical, religious, natural, and mythological contexts of the New World. In short, the themes, settings, and conventions developed in 18th and 19th century Gothic literature have informed a multitude of cultural manifestations throughout the 20th and 21st centuries.

Nearly every scholar who engages with the concept notes the enormous range and ambiguity of the Gothic. Fred Botting has stated that the Gothic is “everywhere and nowhere,” and Nick Groom goes so far as to say that it “risks being emptied or

⁵ See the novels of Ann Radcliffe, Harriet Lee, Catherine Cuthbertson, Eliza Parsons, Eleanor Sleath, Regina Maria Roche, and Frances Burney.

⁶ Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London: Routledge, 2014).

nullified as a meaningful term.” Various recent studies have also drawn attention to the overlap between definitions of the Gothic and the Romantic, and the difficulty of establishing a clear-cut distinction or even defining the exact nature of their relationship.⁷ The contemporary use of “Gothic” as a term of description for literature, film, television, graphic novels, comic books, video games, fashion, toys and games has created difficulties in giving the term a single, precise definition.⁸ A loose list of “Gothic” conventions that are reiterated more or less consistently in most studies of the Gothic across disciplines includes: an emphasis on ‘sublime’ emotional experiences; meditation on morbid topics such as death and decay; themes of monstrosity (social, sexual, psychological and/or physical aberration); Anti-Catholic sentiments coupled with a morbid fascination with Catholic rituals, customs and institutions; references to superstitious beliefs and supernatural phenomena (either ‘genuine’ or revealed to be delusions or hoaxes); a strong sense of a primitive, barbaric, or violent past (both personal and historical) haunting the present and pervading specific locations and buildings; the importance of highly atmospheric and somehow sinister or uncanny places and settings, such as sublime or eerie natural landscapes (usually with dramatic or extreme weather conditions), old mansions, ruins, castles, dungeons, and abbeys; and the use of natural and architectural spaces as external markers of emotional states.

Ultimately, every scholar who uses the term is called on to provide a narrower definition of the Gothic that fits his or her particular research area and discursive

⁷ See Tom Duggett, *Gothic Romanticism: Architecture, Politics, and Literary Form* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) and Michael Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic: Genre, Reception, and Canon Formation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁸ For further discussion on the ambiguity of the Gothic see Groom; Punter and Byron; *Expanding the Gothic Canon*; Nicola Trott, “Gothic,” *Romanticism: an Oxford Guide*, ed. Nicholas Roe (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005) 482–501; Lisa Hopkins, *Screening the Gothic* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2005); and David Huckvale, *Touchstones of Gothic Horror: a Film Genealogy of Eleven Motifs and Images* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2010).

angle. Incorporating many of the above-noted ideas and influences, the term “Gothic” as used in this thesis refers mainly to the literary genre of the 1700s and 1800s, specifically those works that represent intensely character-driven narratives and psychological approaches to a monster character who is perceived as malevolent and socially unacceptable, most often due to some form of physical abnormality. The features that are of particular interest to this silent film-focused research include: the coding of Gothic/Medieval architectural spaces as different, anti-classical, distant, exotic, violent and dangerous; the labelling of the characters that emerge from them as supernatural, erotic, violent, physically abnormal, sexually different and morally perverse; and the use of both to examine pertinent but problematic contemporary issues relating to social prejudice and personal psychological duality. Similarly to 18th and 19th century Gothic literature, Silent Era Gothic film adaptations provided an acceptable context for the exploration of questions otherwise seen as taboo, provocative, or controversial. Despite their threatening “otherness,” the monsters of Gothic novels and their earliest film translations foster reluctant identification and even sympathy by suggesting suppressed urges, fears, and fantasies within the reader or viewer. Ann Radcliffe, one of the pioneers of the Gothic genre in literature explained the appeal of such characters by the fact that they evoke “Terror” rather than “Horror”. In her own words:

Terror and Horror are so far opposite, that the first expands the soul and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life; the other contracts, freezes and nearly annihilates them. I apprehend, that neither Shakespeare nor Milton by their fictions, nor Mr. Burke by his reasoning, anywhere looked to positive horror as a source of the sublime, though they all agree that terror is a very high one; and where lies the great difference between horror and terror, but in

uncertainty and obscurity, that accompany the first, respecting the dreaded evil?⁹

The sublime, uncanny monsters who inspire terror rather than “positive horror” became the true protagonists of the Gothic-inspired silent films discussed in the present research. The films I analyse are either directly based on Gothic novels or on literary sources with pronounced Gothic features (such as those listed above), even if the novels themselves are not always directly identified with the Gothic genre. The monster characters I will be discussing are Jekyll/Hyde from *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson, Quasimodo from *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* by Victor Hugo, Erik from *The Phantom of the Opera* by Gaston Leroux, Dracula from *Dracula* by Bram Stoker, Gwynplaine from *The Man Who Laughs* by Victor Hugo, Frankenstein’s Creature from *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, Roderick Usher and his House from *The Fall of the House of Usher* by Edgar Allan Poe, and Orlac from *The Hands of Orlac* by Maurice Renard. Produced in the first two decades of the cinematic medium’s existence, early cinematic adaptations of these literary monster narratives are the originators of many of the techniques and conventions for monster representation either imitated or discarded in later (sound) films. Devoid of recorded dialogue and sound effects, they adapt the material in an almost purely visual way, without the aid of extensive quotations or dialogue from the novels.

An important criterion for choice of films discussed was their artistic quality. From the earliest days of cinema, literary material provided the advantage of a ready-

⁹ Ann Radcliffe, “On the Supernatural in Poetry,” *The New Monthly Magazine* 1826: 45-52.

made plot, a built-in audience and a veneer of sophistication for a medium still fighting to prove its cultural and artistic validity. While the films included in the present corpus differ in artistic quality, some are among the most creatively innovative and influential works of the Silent Era, recognised as cinematic masterpieces. German silent film director Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau, for instance, whose films *Nosferatu* (1922), *Der Januskopf* (1920), and *Faust* (1926) I analyse, is generally regarded one of the first auteur filmmakers in world cinema, and certainly one of the most formally innovative, especially in relation to expressive camera movement and composition.

Turning to the issue of why exactly the creation of this corpus and its analysis is needed, and its larger value in the fields of silent film history, literature to film adaptation, Gothic studies, and the study of the horror film genre and its precursors. Many important facets of this corpus of films have been under-explored in existing studies. All of the novels and some of the films included in this research have been discussed in books and articles from various historical and theoretical angles.

However, most publications dealing with film adaptations of these novels focus primarily on sound films, starting with the early 1930s. The Silent Era is mentioned only briefly, as a prelude to a wider analysis. Dedicating an entire book specifically to literary monsters in film, Abigail Burnham Bloom chooses five novels to focus on, including *Frankenstein*, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and *Dracula* (Bloom 2010). Although she includes silent films in her analysis in limited fashion, they are never her main focus and she does not discuss Silent Era Gothic adaptations as a collective body of work.

Many relevant studies, such as David J. Skal's *Hollywood Gothic: The Tangled Web of Dracula From Novel to Stage to Screen*, James Craig Holte's *Dracula in the Dark: The Dracula Film Adaptations*, and Ann C. Hall's *Phantom Variations: The Adaptations of Gaston Leroux's Phantom of the Opera, 1925 to the Present*, to name just a few, are based entirely on a single monster character or Gothic novel in all of its known iterations. They all touch on Silent Era adaptations, but usually draw stylistic, narrative, and symbolic parallels only with other adaptations of the same novel, rather than with other silent films of the same genre. They also frequently omit films made before the mid-1920s.

Numerous researchers define Silent Era monster films simply as early precursors of later 'horror' films. For example, Bloom refers to both the literary works and the films she discusses as "horror", arguing however, that "whereas readers of horror novels feared they were like the monster, the watchers of horror movies fear they will be the monster's victim."¹⁰ This generalisation either disregards the narrative and representational techniques employed by Silent Era film adaptations to present the perspective of the monster rather than his victim, or posits that these films do not belong to the horror genre at all. In the introduction to his book on Gothic motifs in film, David Huckvale differentiates between "horror" and "Gothic" film, saying that the Gothic has an "additional and important aesthetic element running through it, which makes it a rather more complex form".¹¹ Misha Kavka also picks up on this generic gap between literature and film in her article about the Gothic on screen. She observes that "there is no established genre called *Gothic cinema* or *Gothic film*,"

¹⁰ Abigail Burnham Bloom, *The Literary Monster on Film : Five Nineteenth Century British Novels and Their Cinematic Dadaptations* (Jefferson, N.C.; London: McFarland & Company, 2010) 2.

¹¹ Huckvale 5.

putting this down to film's late arrival into the thematic and stylistic framework created by Gothic literature. Noting that films with Gothic elements are commonly relegated to the realm of horror without further differentiation, she insists that a recognition of the Gothic as a sub-genre may be useful. She traces the thematic connections between Gothic literature and film, emphasising the genre's preoccupation with a type of paranoia that "involves a blurring of boundaries between self and other" – the socially acceptable and the monstrous – in both literary and cinematic forms.¹²

However, Gothic silent film adaptations, as a corpus of cinematic production with its own stylistic traits, methods for translating literary material into visual terms, and dealing with socially and psychologically complicated themes, have not been discussed in depth and as distinct from later adaptations of novels such as *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*. They are usually categorised and evaluated by the same horror genre standards applied to their sound counterparts. Such an approach is problematic since these films were made before what we know as the modern horror genre had solidified; they can hardly be expected to conform to the same rules as films that were made knowingly within its boundaries. Through the close analysis that will be conducted throughout this thesis a new definition of the silent film Gothic monster will emerge and help to differentiate between the categories of 'Gothic film' and 'horror film'. From the perspective of silent film, this examination is intended as a contribution to the wider, ongoing discourse concerning the relationship between "Gothic" and "horror" film and the changing role of the monster in defining this distinction. To briefly expand on my central claim, it may be said that it is primarily

¹² Misha Kavka, "The Gothic on Screen," *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerrold E Hogle (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002) 209–228.

the attitude adopted towards the figure of the monster that distinguishes the Gothic silent film from sound era horror and its many familiar sub-genres. (This question will be addressed more fully in the Conclusion, summarising the results of my analysis of the silent film literary monster in the body of the thesis.)

As part of this discussion, I will show that Silent Gothic monster films generally favour a cinematic simulation of literary first-person perspective. Even when not adopting subjective point of view shots, for instance, they find ways of consistently placing the viewer in the position of the monster more than (or rather than) the monster's victims. The monster figure's otherness, physical or psychological aberration, foreignness, repressed sexuality, transgression of social and class boundaries, is foregrounded, in many cases sympathetically, through a myriad of silent-film techniques. Viewers are put in a position of identifying with the monster's internal psychological struggles as much as fearing his external actions. Cinematic techniques are harnessed to elevate these characters to the level of myth while still conveying their relatable and human or human-like struggles. While some of these features are inherited from the literary sources in some cases many are the creation of innovative silent film artists and craftsmen.

A Working Definition of the Monster

The concept of the monster and the manner of his manifestation in film and literature form the core of this research and the prism through which all other aspects of the material under discussion will be analysed. As I will here briefly discuss, my working definition of the term 'monster' is the result of a layered approach to its

meanings and contexts, combining the linguistic roots of the word, its direct dictionary definitions, and the connotations attached to the term throughout its use in Gothic literature, philosophy, psychology, theatre, and various art movements spanning the period of the Medieval Gothic to the beginning of the twentieth century. This thesis aims to show how the new medium of silent cinema absorbed and adjusted various literary, dramatic, and visual art conventions of monster depictions recasting and reinterpreting the concept of monstrosity itself using the expressive techniques, characteristics, limitations, innovations and capabilities of the silent film medium, its unique visual language and its distinct way of communicating to an audience.

One of the ancient roots of the word ‘Monster’ is the Latin *Monstrum* (a divine omen), which in turn comes from *monere*, to warn (also Latin).¹³ In *The Gothic*, Punter and Byron engage with the Latin etymology of the term on a deeper level of significance, defining the monster character himself as “something that serves to demonstrate” or warn.¹⁴ Most definitions seem to identify this warning as a primarily physical manifestation. *A Dictionary of the Bible Dealing With Its Language, Literature, and Contents Including the Biblical Theology*, an encyclopaedia of theological terms published in 1900, provides the following definition: “A monster...is anything which attracts the attention from being out of the ordinary course of nature.” Dictionaries of the English and French languages vary however, on precisely what qualities this “unnaturalness” consists in. The most commonly cited trait is horrifying or excessive size. The OED refers to the monster as “anything

¹³ “Monster,” *A Dictionary of the Bible Dealing With Its Language, Literature, and Contents Including the Biblical Theology*, 1900 ed.

¹⁴ Punter and Byron 263-267.

of vast and unwieldy proportions,” while The Oxford Hachette French Dictionary defines *monstre* as “colossal.”

Another frequently referenced feature is hybridity. The Webster’s New World Dictionary of American English and The Collins English Dictionary & Thesaurus present the monster as an “imaginary beast made up of various animal or human parts.” The OED gives a more elaborate definition of this type of hybridity as “a form either partly brute and partly human, or compounded of elements from two or more animal forms,” and cites mythic creatures such as “the centaur, sphinx, minotaur, heraldic griffin, and wyvern” as examples. Most definitions also refer to a sense of deformity, disability, or lack, as in an anomalous plant or animal that is “greatly malformed” or “lacking some parts,” or “an outrageous or ugly person or thing.” In fact, it seems that anything “abnormal in structure” or “deviating in one or more of its parts from the normal type” such as “an animal afflicted with some congenital malformation; a misshapen birth, or an abortion,” can be a monster. In a similar sense, The Oxford Hachette French Dictionary also defines *le monstre* as a “freak of nature” and *monstreux* as “hideous.” The OED adds a contrasting twist to the idea of prodigious difference, on the level of connotation, noting that “In collocations like ‘faultless monster’, and ‘monster of perfection’” the term itself connotes “an incredible or repulsively unnatural degree of excellence” rather than deformity. In other words, any quality or creature that reaches beyond or above the constraints of the ordinary or average to an exaggerated degree can justifiably be termed monstrous.

While the purely physical aspects are the most prevalent in definitions of the monster, there are also spiritual or moral implications of the word. In defining

“Monstrous” for instance, the Webster’s New World Dictionary of American English uses the words “hideously wrong or evil; atrocious.” A monster can also be “a cruel, wicked, or inhuman person”, or “a monstrous example of wickedness or some particular vice.” Synonyms for this definition include “obscene, hellish, fiendish, evil, inhuman, diabolical, odious, loathsome, disgraceful, vicious, foul, and villainous.” In this context, it is hardly surprising that the *Dictionary of the Bible* defines “demon” and “devil” in the same terms, while extending the sense of “monster” to an implied dualistic contrast between physical and moral evil whether “existing *in* man physically in the form of bodily disease, or spiritually as moral evil” or “as having a source *outside* man.”

Definitions and theories of monstrosity in literary theory and criticism are extremely numerous and diverse. Monsters in Gothic literature are frequently understood as embodying the ‘grotesque’ and ‘incomplete’ or deformed, and seen as reinforcing the boundaries of ‘normality’ and human virtue. Outside the boundaries of acceptance, they also function as the physical embodiment of repressed urges and tendencies, blurring socio-cultural borders and restrictions and challenging the reader or viewer to question normality and conformity through recognition of thinly-veiled ‘deviations’ within his or her own nature.¹⁵ In the words of Oscar Wilde, “Each man sees his own sins in Dorian Gray.”¹⁶

Echoing these ideas although not referring directly to the term “monster,” Peter L. Hays discusses lameness and disability in literature as archetypal and symbolic of

¹⁵ Punter and Byron 263-267.

¹⁶ Judith Halberstam, *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Durham: Duke UP, 1995) 13.

other spiritual or physical limitations.¹⁷ Halberstam sees the monstrous body as a machine that absorbs the phobias of the reader and embodies them within the narrative, while Bloom extends the “corruption” of the monster to society itself, asserting that the monster is a reflection of “what is wrong with an individual or even with society as a whole”.¹⁸ In certain cases the monstrous body also reflects the fears and prejudices of society, serving as a symbol of ‘foreignness’ and ‘Otherness’.¹⁹

The concept of Otherness is also often internalized in Gothic literature in the form of the Double, equating fear of the Double with fear of self-knowledge/the subconscious. The roots of this philosophical approach can be traced to medieval Gothic theological writings. This principle is powerfully explored in the writings of the early Gothic monk Gottschalk. In his works from the 830s onwards he developed the idea that “God’s predestination is dual: of the good to bliss and of the wicked to damnation.”²⁰

In visualising monstrosity, various artistic movements and styles have sought to give the monster form, volume, colour, and texture. In medieval Gothic cathedral sculpture the Devil himself is the ultimate monster, accompanied by a menagerie of demonic minions, gargoyles, and chimaeras. Some of the main features of the monstrous in this context include a deviation from traditional or normal bodily proportions, exaggerations of specific body parts, animalistic qualities and features, fusions of human and animal attributes, and references to death and decay.

¹⁷ Peter L Hays, *The Limping Hero: Grotesques in Literature* (New York: New York UP, 1971).

¹⁸ Bloom 1.

¹⁹ Bloom 161.

²⁰ John Marenbon, ed. *Medieval Philosophy, Routledge History of Philosophy Volume III* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).

Developing almost simultaneously with cinema, the Art Nouveau movement offered a new take on the monster. Elevating the Gothic template to extremes, Art Nouveau artists created images of fantastically hybridised creatures, combining human, mammal, reptile, amphibian, plant, insect, and bird characteristics in one body. These perverse, supernatural representations, brimming with overt sexuality and visceral energy, expressed the wild, decadent, untamed side of human nature. In creating these images, Art Nouveau artists simultaneously reinvented and reinterpreted Gothic ideas of the duality of human nature and the tension between light and darkness.

The German Expressionist movement of the early 20th century also brought new representations and understandings of the monster. A sense of insecurity and disillusionment, tinted by the horrors of World War I brought about “an attraction for all that is obscure and undetermined”. This included dark magic, mysticism, and folklore, as, in Lotte Eisner’s poetic terms, “...the ghosts which had haunted the German Romantics revived, like the shades of Hades after draughts of blood.”²¹ Such fears and related urges channeled themselves into a new vision of monstrosity. Harsh angles, menacing diagonal lines, bold, clashing shadows, sweeping curves and discordant value contrasts were used to evoke feelings of fear, isolation, and anxiety. Through evocative compositional techniques, Expressionist painting, theatre, and cinema created a disembodied monster that pervaded the atmosphere with his tormented aura, contrasting with the very fleshy physical presence of his Gothic and Art Nouveau predecessors.

²¹ Lotte H. Eisner, *The Haunted Screen: Expressionism in the German Cinema and the Influence of Max Reinhardt* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1969) 9.

While etymology provides a literal route to understanding the monster and his significance, and visual art endows him with a body, face and a symbolic vocabulary, philosophy and psychology add a further analytic dimension. Philosophical and psychological notions of duality, the uncanny, and horror help to elucidate both social responses to the monster figure and the self-perception of the monster himself. Even when not referencing the monster directly, philosophical ideas offer insights into his spiritual, physical, and social construction. A prime example is Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*.²² Writing in the mid-1700s, Burke was both a product and an inspiration for the cultural environment that produced the first wave of European Gothic literature.

Burke's enquiry covers a range of sublime emotional experiences, sensory responses, and aesthetic standards for beauty and ugliness. He extends the boundaries of sublimity to cover any sensation that reaches a certain degree of exaltation, even negative sensations such as fear and pain. This inseparable combination of ambiguity and intensity is curiously akin to the concept of monstrosity itself. As Burke's ideas had a profound influence on Gothic literature, it can be illuminating to apply them to a discussion of both the literary Gothic monster and his cinematic descendants.

In the 20th century, Carl Jung explored a psychological/philosophical rather than spiritual or theological approach to the concept of duality. He presents the inner struggle of the individual as a conflict between the archetype, or the ideal self, and "the shadow" - the hidden, darker, side of a person's nature, which has not yet been

²² Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry Into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990).

realised and assimilated.²³ On a more external level, social perceptions of the monster are closely tied to Sigmund Freud's theory of the Uncanny.²⁴ Many of the ideas expressed in Freud's writings are strongly manifested in representations of the unfamiliar/subconscious as well as the monstrous in Gothic silent film. Noel Carroll builds his own philosophy of horror, bringing in various other theories including the ones discussed above and applying them to a range of media with a specific focus on film and filmic imagery. His discussion of the distinction between "art-horror" and "natural horror" is especially relevant to representations of the monstrous in silent Gothic film.²⁵

Of all the features that make up the monster concept, the one that seems to resonate most emphatically in Gothic silent film is the theme of duality. Other features that were assimilated by the silent film medium as part of the physical and psychological image of the monster include anomalies in size or proportion, disability/deformity, hybridity, abnormal hideousness or abnormal perfection, a sinful/evil nature, demonic origin, and a potential for viciousness and aggression. While the above listed traditional features and conventions formed a significant element in the construction of the cinematic monster, the new medium of film was able to contribute some innovative aspects and approaches of its own.

One of the most common changes from literary depictions was an increased emphasis on first-person perspective, allowing for a more intimate view of the monster's duality. Using purely cinematic effects such as close-ups, point of view shots, and suggestive editing a film could plunge its audience deep into a monster's

²³ C. G Jung, *On the Nature of the Psyche* (London: Routledge Classics, 2001) 140.

²⁴ Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, trans. David McLintock (London: Penguin Books, 2003).

²⁵ Noel Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror, or, Paradoxes of the Heart* (New York London: Routledge, 1990).

tormented psyche. The viewer could now simultaneously look into the monster's eyes and *see through* them, allowing for a much greater level of identification and intimacy. This type of cinematic representation cast the monster as an *internal* threat – representing the dark, suppressed urges and fears that destroy an individual from within; rather than as an *external* threat – a soulless force of evil attacking the virtuous from outside.

With this background in mind, ultimately the term 'monster' as used in this research refers first and foremost to the Gothic literary usage of the word - the monster as an embodiment of the conflicted human soul and a projection of the fearful 'other', a double who is both a 'warning' and 'demonstration' of the sublimated urge for nonconformity. Abnormal on a physical, emotional, social, or spiritual level, the monster is placed beyond the boundaries of society either through fear and rejection or through his own sense of superiority to all that is perceived as normal. While monsters may appear in many different forms, the silent film Gothic monster is inevitably a projection of inner duality. Whether monstrosly beautiful or monstrosly repulsive, he is both a reflection of the darker, suppressed side of those around him and a victim of his own inner conflict. His aura of threat and potential for evil are maintained throughout, but the nature of the cinematic image endows this aura with a new dimension. Breaking down the barriers between viewer and character through the use of cinematic techniques silent films tended to create a greater sense of proximity, understanding, and even complicity with the monster. Whether romanticised, made pitiful, or shown as majestic and sublime, the monster is no longer – or *only* – an object for unreasoning, externalised fear because we are invited into the deepest recesses of his mind. This thesis will examine the

construction of the silent film cinematic monster through the new techniques introduced by the cinematic medium including editing, camera movement, special effects, composition, close-ups, lighting design and the particularities of on-camera performance.

The problem of classifying the silent film Gothic monster due to his intermedial and multifarious nature will be addressed in depth in the introduction to Chapter Four. A variety of classification systems that have been applied to monster figures in the fields of literature, film, history, sociology, psychology, eugenics, Disability Studies, and philosophy will be reviewed, with the conclusion that none of them can fully encompass the features of the silent film Gothic literary monster. The need for a flexible, custom-designed taxonomy will be raised, leading into the key features surveyed in Chapters Four-Eight.

Thesis Structure and Outline

The thesis consists of eleven sections. Following a general Introduction, Chapter I describes the relevant socio-political and cultural environment in which the films under discussion were made. In relation to the choices made by filmmakers in terms of subject matter, narrative alteration, and interpretation of literary sources, the first chapter offers analyses of turn-of-the-century advances in psychology, evolutionary theory and eugenics studies, the psychological and physical trauma of World War I, and medical experimentation on the reconstruction of the fragmented face and body. The first chapter also explores the profound interconnections between the stylistic choices made in the films analysed and other contemporary arts such as painting,

sculpture, architecture and music as well as such products of mass culture as advertising, magazine illustrations and penny dreadfuls. The intermedial artistic movements covered in this section include Impressionism, German Expressionism, Surrealism, Cubism, Dadaism, Constructivism, Fauvism, and the International Style.

The second chapter introduces the eight silent film monster characters who form the core of this thesis: Jekyll and Hyde, Dracula, Erik (the Phantom of the Opera), Quasimodo, Roderick Usher, Gwynplaine, Orlac, and Frankenstein's Creature. A number of other literary monster figures are referenced throughout for comparative purposes, including Dorian Gray from *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde and Faust from *Faust* by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. After a summary of applicable theories from the field of adaptation studies, a brief overview of the original literary source is provided for each monster character, followed by an outline of the monster's appearances in silent film and the state of preservation of the listed films. The specific choice of monsters for use in this study was determined by four major criteria. The first is the centrality of the monster figure to the original literary narrative. The second is the frequency of a given monster character's portrayals in silent film. The third is the level of preservation and availability of relevant films; this research is not based exclusively on preserved footage as a number of the films discussed are now considered lost. Information on lost films was reconstructed on the basis of film stills and production photographs, posters, contemporary reviews, advertisements in trade magazines contemporary to the film's release, screenplays, novelisations, concept art, interviews and other materials obtained in various archives. However, in-depth analyses were constructed only for those monsters for whom at least one silent film adaptation is preserved. The fourth

and final criterion is the influence and artistic quality of the films featuring the character. In some instances only several silent adaptations were made but one or more of them was of exceptional artistic or technical quality and/or had a traceable impact on later versions. Such films are included even if they form part of a smaller corpus. In all cases, a greater amount of attention was devoted to films that demonstrate a significant degree of creative vision and artistic intent, particularly in relation to the styles and aesthetics explored in other contemporary media and art forms.

Chapter Three places this corpus of films into the context of silent film history and theory by examining the elements of cinematic language that were particularly useful in translating monster characters and Gothic literary narratives into silent film. Cinematic techniques such as composition, framing and use of camera angles, lighting design, editing, special effects, set, costume and makeup design, and gestural language are analysed in application to the monster figure on the basis of examples from the films under discussion. The place of the Gothic monster figure in the historical and theoretical evolution of these techniques will also be examined.

The factual information, description, formal analysis, and evaluation provided in the previous chapters form the basis for the more theoretical explorations of Chapters Four to Eight, which offer an original classification of the silent film monster as seen through various philosophical and aesthetic concepts. On the basis of close formal analyses of the films under discussion, these chapters present detailed studies of five major patterns of representation shared by Gothic silent film monsters. Each chapter is focused around a single quality or mode of representation, using multiple monsters as examples to identify aesthetic and thematic parallels, intersections, and

recurrences. The topics covered in these chapters include: the Doppelgänger and theories of duality, cultural perceptions and representations of deformity and disability, the ‘monstrification’ of architectural and organic space and the monster’s relationship with his environment, monstrous hybridity and the fear of science, and the practice of “de-monstrifying” the monster by evoking sympathetic or romantic associations and implications. The eleventh and final section consists of a number of conclusions pertaining to the treatment of this group of films as a unique phenomenon with its own special legacy. Film stills are included throughout the thesis, accompanied by a list of captions. A full list of cited sources and a filmography of analysed films are included.

Chapter I - The Silent Film Monster in Socio-Political and Cultural Context

The content and style of the Silent Era ‘monster’ films analysed in this thesis developed in close interconnection with other cultural phenomena of the time. The ideas, concepts and atmosphere of these films echoed the era in which they were created. This chapter will highlight a range of contextual factors that are highly relevant to the Silent Era monster figure, its roots, the process of its creation, and its role in the context of contemporary culture.

Silent film emerged and developed as a novel and immediately influential form of art in Europe and America at the turn of the 20th century. It entered a new, global, and rapidly changing world distinguished by urbanisation and industrialisation, innovative developments in the sciences and social sciences, two World Wars and political revolutions - all leading to significant social changes. The technological innovations of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries revolutionised the world not least through fundamentally altering the human perception of time and space. Communication and transportation technology resulted in “shrinking the Earth.”²⁶ New perspectives and ideas that formed in the nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth centuries challenged traditional conservative ways of thinking about all aspects of human life. The works of Charles Darwin, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud on the unconscious mind, psychological drives and socio-cultural and economic forces from which no

²⁶ William R. Keylor, *The Twentieth-Century World: An International History* (New York: Oxford UP, 1984) 27-28.

individual was free revolutionised perceptions and attitudes no less than the technological advances of the time²⁷.

The consumers of culture changed as well. The democratisation of political and social life, broader access to education, and socialist and feminist movements changed the balance of social power. The new urban consumer society included previously underrepresented groups such as the working class, women and youth. The new mass popular culture manifested itself in an unprecedented demand for popular journalism as a way of helping to make sense of such a rapidly changing environment together with new forms of entertainment which utilised the latest science and technology and inspired widespread curiosity. As expressed by a German newspaper subscriber in 1926, “I...want to hear something about natural sciences, about politics, about literature, about crime, in short I want to feel the pulse of life.”²⁸ In Germany alone, the number of magazines and newspapers rose to 7,303, constituting a 19-fold increase from the beginning of the 19th century.²⁹ Illustrated serialised novels and elaborate advertisements became part of the new consumer culture. Film addressed the same mass audience targeting both the newspaper-reading public and the more sophisticated book-reading public.

From the end of the nineteenth century, silent film assumed the role of an internationally understood global language, as it became a product and reflection of its contemporary troubled world. Many German, French and American films were released internationally and seen almost simultaneously around the globe. Whether

²⁷ For more on these topics see Vassiliki Kolocotroni, Jane Goldman and Olga Taxidou, eds. *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1998); Sigmund Freud, Josef Breuer and Nicola Luckhurst, *Studies in Hysteria* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004); Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Der Wille zur Macht: Versuch einer Umwertung aller Werte* (Leipzig: Kröner, 1930).

²⁸ Karl Christian Führer and Corey Ross, eds. *Mass Media, Culture and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) 186.

²⁹ Führer and Ross 207.

as entertainment or a means of communication, film had larger audiences and wider immediate impact than any previous art form, earning a special place in contemporary culture and social life. The demand for films was unprecedented. By 1918 Germany had to fill 2280 cinemas and this number grew to 3500 in 1928 when around 353 million cinema tickets were sold.³⁰ Germany produced more films throughout the Weimar Period than the rest of Europe taken together. In the midst of economic disasters, continuous political violence and dark predictions for the future, the experimental and innovative phenomenon of Weimar culture experienced an unprecedented flourishing of theatre, literature, music, and film.

The popularity of film in Europe was so great in fact, that it was seen as a threat to literature, theatre and other forms of leisure (dancing, social drinking, etc). These fears led to a prediction in the British *New Statesman* in 1914 that “Every man will become his own cinematographer. There will be a cinematograph not only in every street but in every home.”³¹ Frequently, cinemas were filled with mass-produced third-rate

films with public appeal, the box-office attractions about the Rhine and the beautiful blue Danube, about the heart someone left in Heidelberg, the flag-waving films about Frederic the Great, Schill’s heroic Prussian officer, the King’s Grenadiers and the First World War.³²

However not all films were light entertainment. Many filmmakers saw an advantage in the ability of film to record reality and therefore make strong social statements. The *Zille-Filme*, Erno Metzner, Leo Mittler and many others recorded

³⁰ Bärbel Schrader and Jürgen Schebera, *The “Golden” Twenties: Art and Literature in the Weimar Republic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988) 89.

³¹ Julian Jackson, ed. *Europe: 1900-1945* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002) 178-9.

³² Lotte H. Eisner, *Dämonische Leinwand: die Blütezeit des Deutschen Films* (Wiesbaden-Biebrich: Feldt, 1955) 323.

Berlin slums, unbearable social conditions, the misery of the poor, and the life of the working-class districts. To some, these films were a “ballad of poor folk.”³³

Alongside entertainment and propaganda films, productions that may be referred to as artistic in intention and achievement (or “art films”) were a small part of the total film output. The group of Gothic monster films making up the corpus of this thesis are part of this select body, yet many of them enjoyed public success and critical acclaim. Directors like Robert Wiene, F.W. Murnau and Fritz Lang created a series of cinematic masterpieces that helped film develop into a truly sophisticated art form. The monster films of the 1910s and 20s were usually literary adaptations based on Gothic literary sources translating their themes of the duality of human nature, the inner monster, and the psychology of physical abnormality into cinematic form and partly as a response to the wartime and postwar world.

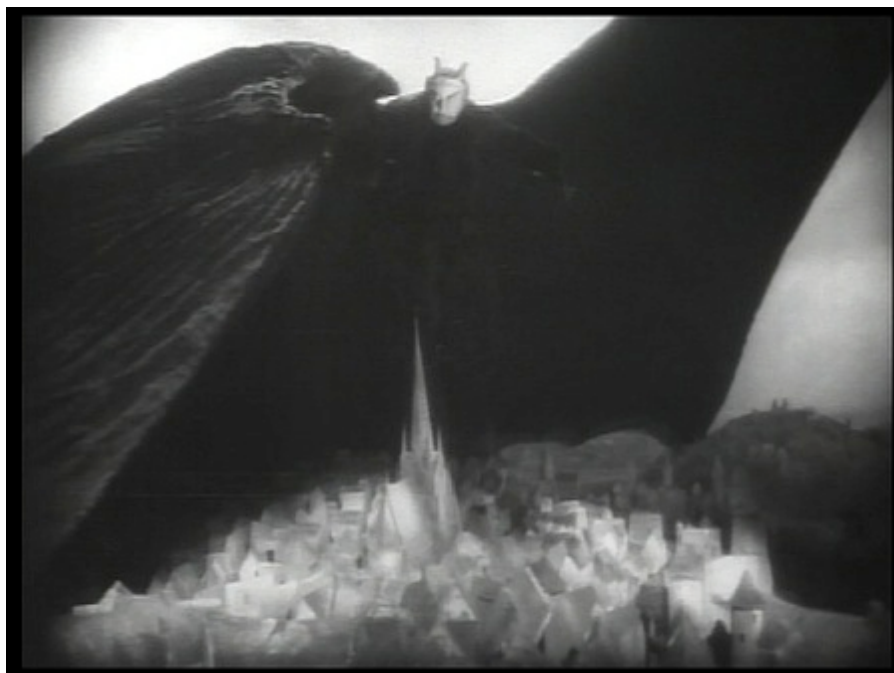


Figure 1: Emil Jannings as Mephisto in *Faust* (UFA 1926), Directed by F.W. Murnau. Film frame.

³³ Schrader and Schebera 96.

The Influence of World War I, Medical Advances and Eugenics

World War I had an enormous impact on every aspect of the political, social, and cultural life of the Western world in the early 20th century. In 1914 Europe entered the period of the Thirty Years' War, incomparable in the number of casualties and economic destruction caused by the wars themselves and economic depressions. Germany at the beginning of the century went through the largest roller-coaster of political events, moving from the stability and prosperity of its 'golden years' (1890-1914) to defeat in WWI, the collapse of its monarchy and then the democratic government of the Weimar Republic, and economically "the worst inflation and the worst depression the world has ever seen."³⁴ Despair and disillusionment in the foundations of Western society and culture were expressed in art, literature and film after the war. Wartime and postwar art was created mostly by veterans of the war for veterans, participants and victims of this shattering historical cataclysm. Emotional reactions to the war were embodied in every form of art and became an essential part of the construction of the monster figure in film.

Medical advances leading to the survival of soldiers with injuries that would have been fatal in previous wars increased the numbers of physically disabled and disfigured veterans. Makeup and prosthetics in film were designed by those who had witnessed the horrors of wartime mutilation first-hand. Film plots centred around undermining the integrity of the human body, themes of anxiety, paranoia, insanity, fragmentation (the literal fragmentation of the damaged body and the psychological fragmentation of consciousness and identity), duality and split personality, and

³⁴ Richard Bessel, "Germany From War to Dictatorship," *Twentieth-Century Germany: Politics, Culture and Society 1918-1990*, ed. Mary Fullbrook (London and New York: Oxford UP, 2001) 11–35. 12

personal and national guilt. Such images and ideas must have had profound resonance with audiences accustomed to images of disfigurement and mutilation in streets, families, newsreels, newspapers, military parades, and even medical museums.³⁵ The emergence of scientific advances like plastic surgery raised both anxiety over the effects of biological modification and artificial interference and a yearning for an unattainable ideal - the ability to ultimately remould the violated body or face into a more 'perfect' form. Pioneers of plastic surgery such as WWI surgeon Jacques W. Maliniac described their work in terms of sculpture, implying that the human body had become a lump of raw material that the surgeon could turn into a work of art.³⁶



Figure 2: WWI soldier with porcelain face mask designed by sculptor Anna Coleman Ladd, circa 1920.

³⁵ For more on these subjects see David J Skal, *The Monster Show: A Cultural History of Horror* (London: Plexus, 1994) and Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (London: D. Dobson, 1947).

³⁶ Jacques W Maliniac, *Sculpture in the Living: Rebuilding the Face and Form by Plastic Surgery* (New York: The Lancet Press, 1934).

This theme found strong expression in such films as Robert Wiene's *Orlacs Hände* (1924), based on a novel already heavily informed by wartime physical and emotional trauma. In fact the author of the literary source, Maurice Renard, showed particular interest in the psychological effects of physiological modifications to the human body in his novels and short stories. Most of these do not specifically reference the War, but 1921's *L'Homme truqué* does deal specifically with a blinded WWI soldier who is captured and given artificial eyes by a German scientist.³⁷ Such narratives incorporated both the inherent trauma of a fragmented body and fears relating to rapid scientific advances and the ability to maintain/enhance a body that has lost its natural integrity. These themes were further sharpened in the transition to film with Wiene's adaptation of Renard's *Les Mains d'Orlac* directly incorporating imagery reminiscent of battlefields and shelling.³⁸ David Skal describes *Orlacs Hände* as "a guilty postwar dream of murder, mutilation, and madness". He also directly relates the makeup designed for Lon Chaney in 1923's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* to the faces of mutilated war veterans.³⁹



Figure 3: Publicity still showing Lon Chaney's makeup as Quasimodo in 1923's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Universal), directed by Wallace Worsley.

³⁷ Maurice Renard, *L'Homme truqué: suivi de Château hanté et de La Rumeur dans la montagne*. (Paris: G. Crès, 1921).

³⁸ Arthur B. Evans, "The Fantastic Science Fiction of Maurice Renard," *Science Fiction Studies* 21.3 1994: 380–396.

³⁹ Skal *Monster Show* 53.

Themes of insanity and neurosis, which were popular in turn-of-the-century literature, art and film, were connected to the war experience as well. Barbara Hales cites both Sigmund Freud and psychiatrist Ludwig Scholz (who studied neurosis in WWI soldiers) as linking neurosis to the trauma of war and the onset of physical symptoms such as paralysis, blindness, and muteness as an unconscious defence mechanism for withdrawing oneself from a trauma-inducing environment such as the battlefield.⁴⁰ Films like *Caligari* and *Orlac* also exploited fears of hypnosis in the treatment of psychological maladies and the belief that hypnotic influence could be used to force a patient to commit crimes unwittingly. This fear was based on the facts that hypnosis was used in WWI Germany as method for treating hysterical symptoms.⁴¹ Quoting German financier Carl Melchior, Modris Eksteins describes the state of “general nervous excitement” in Germany and reiterates Melchior’s statement that “eight or nine of every ten men is suffering from nervous illness.”⁴² According to Anton Kaes, “*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* marks a bold beginning in Weimar’s engagement with the trauma of the war. Participating in contemporaneous debates about military psychiatry, shell shock, and malingering, the film is concerned with recording and saving a memory of the war experience that must not be lost-precisely because it runs counter to the official orthodoxy with its intent to harmonise and heroicize the conflict.”⁴³ Kaes also compares the film’s claustrophobic, overhanging streets with war trenches, interpreting the film as a symbolic depiction of the wartime experience.

⁴⁰ Barbara Hales, “Incurable Madness: War Trauma, Hypnosis, and Robert Wiene’s *Orlacs Hände*,” *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies* 47.5 2011: 578–590.

⁴¹ See Hales, “Incurable Madness” and Anton Kaes, *Shell Shock Cinema: Weimar Culture and the Wounds of War* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2009) 63–70.

⁴² Modris Eksteins, “Culture,” *Europe: 1900–1945*, ed. Julian Jackson (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002) 173–198. 183–184

⁴³ Kaes 86.



Figure 4: Claustrophobic set design in *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Decla-Bioscop 1919), directed by Robert Wiene. Publicity still obtained from the Filmmuseum-Berlin/Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek.

The physical images and psychological interpretations of both literary and cinematic monsters were also highly influenced by the emerging science of eugenics. The principles of eugenics gained great attention in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, crossing over from scientific research into popular culture and influencing literature, art, theatre, and the new medium of film. According to eugenics pioneer Sir Francis Galton, “eugenics is the science which deals with all influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race; also with those that develop them to the utmost advantage.”⁴⁴ Galton and his followers advocated improving the genetic

⁴⁴ Francis Galton, “Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope, and Aims,” *The American Journal of Sociology* X.1 1904: 1.

makeup of the human population through *artificial* rather than *natural* selection. This process gave rise to both the idea of positive eugenics - encouraging the breeding of individuals with socially desirable genetic traits - and negative eugenics - discouraging or sterilising those with supposedly 'defective' genes.

The mid-1800s witnessed an upsurge of interest in eugenics, inspired by innovative scientific thought on genetics and human evolution. Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, described in his 1859 book *On the Origin of Species* opened a new and shocking perspective on biology and heredity. In his 1865 article "Hereditary Talent and Character," Galton attempted to project Darwin's principles of natural selection onto modern society arguing that just as nature could 'select' and 'encourage' traits desirable for survival, society could select traits it considered desirable by controlling human breeding.⁴⁵ Davis links the pathologization of disability in the 19th century to the demands of industrialisation, which caused a strong and able body to be prized for its ability to contribute to society and the economy.⁴⁶ Galton coined the term 'eugenics' and went on to expand and develop his ideas in further publications including his book *Hereditary Genius*.⁴⁷ Some studies, such as those of Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso and Eugene Talbot's medically-oriented *Degeneracy: its Causes, Signs, and Results* emphasised links between genetics and moral corruption, outlining the importance of eugenics in fighting crime and diagnosing mental conditions.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Francis Galton, "Hereditary Talent and Character," *Macmillan's Magazine* 12 1865: 157–166.

⁴⁶ Lennard J. Davis, "Crips Strike Back: The Rise of Disability Studies," *American Literary History* 1 Oct. 1999: 500–512.

⁴⁷ Francis Galton, *Hereditary Genius: An Inquiry Into Its Laws and Consequences* (London: Macmillan, 1869).

⁴⁸ Cesare Lombroso, *The Man of Genius* (London; New York: W. Scott; C. Scribner's sons, 1891); Gina Lombroso and Cesare Lombroso, *Criminal Man* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1911);

By the early 1900s these ideas became a movement; universities were introducing eugenics as an academic discipline and eugenics societies were forming all over the world, spreading from the UK as far out as the United States, Germany, Scandinavia, France and Australia. International Eugenics Conferences were organised in both the US and UK. The rising interest in, and acceptance of, eugenic principles led to legislation relating to the sterilisation of mentally ill patients and affected other policy areas, especially family planning, education, and immigration.⁴⁹

Through its implications of ‘genetic fitness’ and the association of ‘undesirable’ genes with madness, criminality, perversion, and disease eugenics soon acquired a strong moral dimension. Its tenets gave rise to highly controversial practices because of the extreme subjectivity of the choices made and resultant violations of the human right to reproduction. The movement lost much of its momentum after the widely popularised Nuremberg trials and Nazi attempts to justify the atrocities of WWII concentration camps by applying eugenic theories.

Although Galton’s studies place their main emphasis on positive eugenics, an interest in negative eugenics blossomed within 10 years of Galton’s publication of “Hereditary Talent”, ushered in and encouraged by such publications as those of Lombroso and Talbot. Undesirable characteristics identified by negative eugenicists included mental and physical disabilities, low IQ scores, criminal tendencies, sexual deviations, physical resemblance to ethnic and racial minorities, physical manifestations of mental depravity and/or inadequacy, epilepsy, large and powerful jaws, strongly developed orbital arches, hooked or flat noses, supernumerary teeth,

Eugene S Talbot, *Degeneracy: Its Causes, Signs, and Results* (New York: Walter Scott ; Charles Scribners, 1904).

⁴⁹ Randall Hansen and Desmond King, “Eugenic Ideas, Political Interests, and Policy Variance: Immigration and Sterilization Policy in Britain and the U.S.,” in *World Politics* 1 Jan. 2001: 237–263. 240

both protruding and receding jaws, a forehead sloping at an angle sharper than 75 degrees (due to below-average brain capacity) and ‘ape-like’ facial features. In *Criminal Man*, Lombroso specifically applies eugenics principles in the context of criminology, using terms such as ‘born criminal’ and ‘moral insanity’ and providing detailed lists of ‘physical and psychic’ characteristics that identify his criminal ‘types.’ Both Talbot and Lombroso clearly establish and illustrate visual markers by which ‘degenerate’ or morally corrupt individuals can be identified supporting their conclusions with sketches, diagrams, photographs and skull measurements taken in prisons and insane asylums. These illustrative materials are accompanied by detailed technical explanations of how the physical characteristics of these individuals reveal their inner depravity and potential for violence and crime.⁵⁰

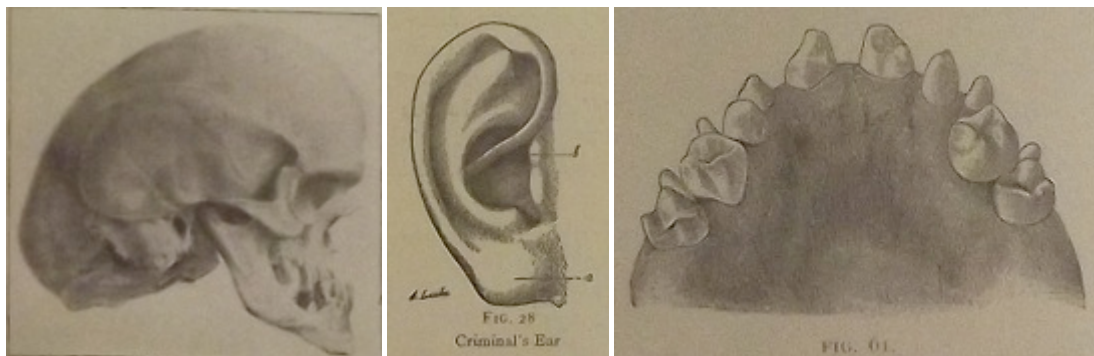


Figure 5: From left to right – Eugene Talbot’s sketch of a dolicocephalic skull as a possible indicator of ‘degeneracy’; Cesare Lombroso’s sketch of a ‘Criminal’s Ear’; Eugene Talbot’s sketch of a jaw with supernumerary and ‘primitive’ conical teeth.⁵¹

Fiction literature, especially mysteries, detective stories, science fiction novels, thrillers and tales of the supernatural reveal the strong influence of contemporary eugenics studies on popular culture. A diverse range of writers such as Arthur Conan Doyle, Maurice Leblanc, Bram Stoker, Robert Louis Stevenson, and many others

⁵⁰ See Lombroso *Criminal* and Talbot *Degeneracy* for detailed lists of features, sketches, and photographs.

⁵¹ Illustrations from: Talbot, Figure 12; Lombroso *Criminal*, Figure 28; Talbot, Figure 61.

employed the classifications and physical characteristics listed by eugenicists in their descriptions of fictional criminals, villains and even supernatural beings to highlight their innate perversion and potential for violence.⁵² Traces of eugenics-inspired ideas of “tainted” genetics and undesirability for reproduction are clearly visible in literary and later cinematic depictions of physically disabled, mentally ill, and even accidentally or artificially disfigured individuals. From the turn of the century and even to the present day, such individuals are conventionally portrayed as either asexual or sexually deviant, and ultimately not entitled to marriage and reproduction. The experiences of WWI and popular eugenics studies strongly influenced the iconography of the monster figure in silent film.

Influences of Other Arts

Stylistically, the powerful imagery and multilayered aesthetics of silent monster films were formed in connection with a range of other artistic and cultural movements, referencing them and influencing them in return. The emerging medium of film is often associated with ‘modernist’ and ‘avant-garde’ artistic styles and movements. These terms, of course, remain the subject of intense debates as to whether they designate a particular time period, art produced in particular geographical regions, or the distinctive features of specific works of art, or all of these.⁵³ If modernism and the avant-garde refer to cultural and artistic movements based upon medial, formal and technological innovation, experimentation, and new

⁵² For more on the influence of eugenics studies on Bram Stoker’s descriptions of Dracula, see David J. Skal, *Hollywood Gothic: The Tangled Web of Dracula from Novel to Stage to Screen* (London: Deutsch, 1992).

⁵³ Peter Brooker et al., eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010).

ways of thinking and seeing the world as represented in art, film was a product and a part of this process. According to Jackson, “For modern art as for modern science,” (at the turn of the 20th century), “shock and surprise had become ...an integral part of the cultural landscape. Because it contradicted conventions and respectability, surprise was associated with freedom.”⁵⁴ ‘Shocking’ and innovative as it was, modernist art and film was rooted in the traditional literary and artistic language of metaphor, extra- and inter-textual reference, parody, and allusion. Some of the most influential literary works of the century, “The Waste Land” by T.S. Eliot and *Ulysses* by James Joyce (both published in 1922) evoke Homer, Ovid, Shakespeare, Dante, classical mythology and Biblical references. Filmmaker Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau used his extensive art historical background to create visual metaphors based on the paintings of Camille Corot, Caspar David Friedrich, and the French impressionists among others into his films.

Narratively, most of the monster-centred films of the Silent Era were based on or loosely inspired by literary sources from the 18th and 19th centuries, mythology and folklore. These sources included everything from Biblical references, to Greek mythology, to classical novels, popular plays and even penny dreadfuls. Their interpretations of this material reworked the deep mythic and historical themes of their sources and recreated them for a new audience, generating images and conventions that are still at work in cinematic representations over 100 years later. The early cinematic vampire image, for instance, had very deep cultural roots going back to at least the 1700s. Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s unfinished poem, “Christabel” incorporated hints of vampiric possession as early as 1797. Lord Byron’s epic poem

⁵⁴ Jackson 178.

“The Giaour: A Fragment of a Turkish Tale” (1813) brought the vampire legend into an exotic Oriental setting and a gruesome tale of doomed romance. John William Polidori’s *The Vampyre* (1819), centres around the figure of an aristocratic male vampire named Lord Ruthven who travels the world seducing both men and women with his charm, then draining their blood and/or causing their destruction. However, throughout the 1800s, vampires were predominantly associated with irresistibly alluring women, usually of exotic, unnatural or mysterious origin in such novels as Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu’s novel *Carmilla* (1872), *The Blood of the Vampire* by Florence Marryat and *Alarune* (1911), by Hanns Heinz Ewers. This trend is also reflected in Edvard Munch’s 1895 painting *Love and Pain* and Philip Burne-Jones’s 1897 painting *The Vampire*, which inspired Rudyard Kipling’s 1897 poem of the same name.

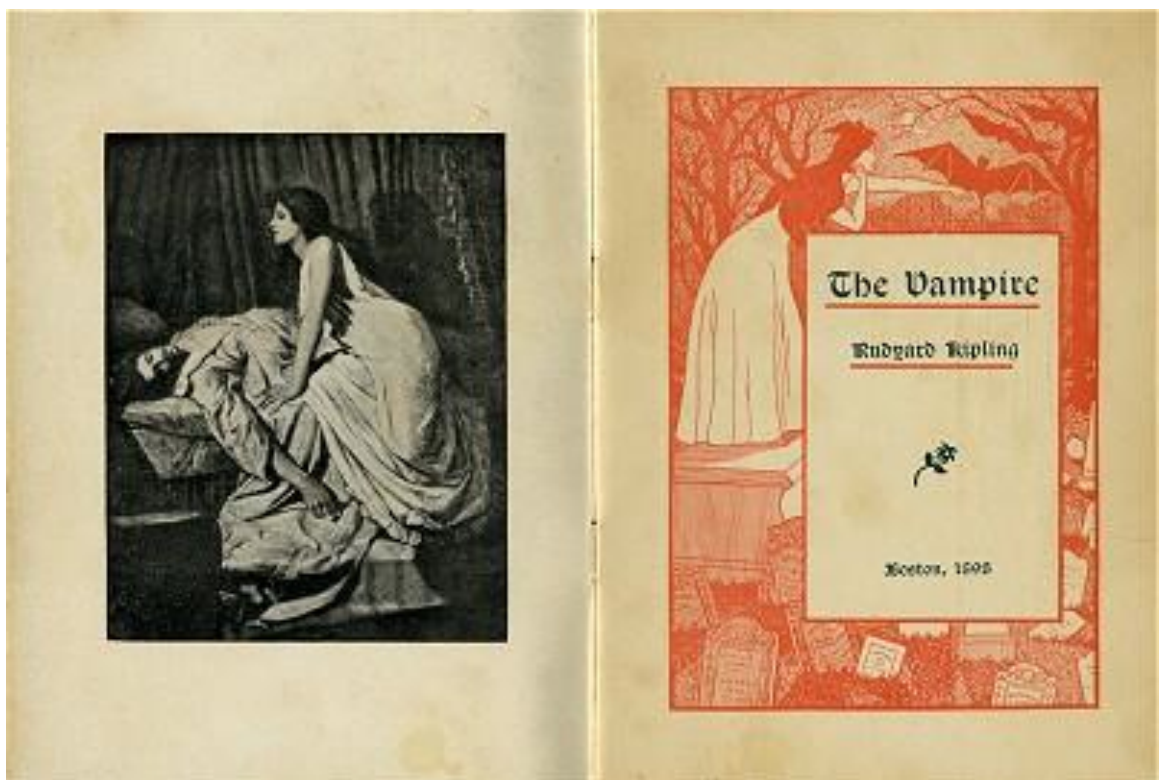


Figure 6: Title page for an 1898 edition of “The Vampire.” Poem by Rudyard Kipling (1897), original painting *The Vampire*, by Sir Philip Burne-Jones, 1897, oil on canvas.

Alongside this steady stream of *femmes fatales*, Polodori's charismatic but soulless Lord Ruthven launched a series of stories about vampiric Sirs, Lords and Counts. Characters such as Sir Francis Varney, from popular 'penny dreadful' *Varney the Vampire* (1845-1847), helped develop and solidify many of the tropes of vampiric representation across media. The cinematic medium soon joined in this rich intermedial exchange, processing the visual and narrative tropes developed for painting and theatre and re-imagining the characters and narratives explored in literature.

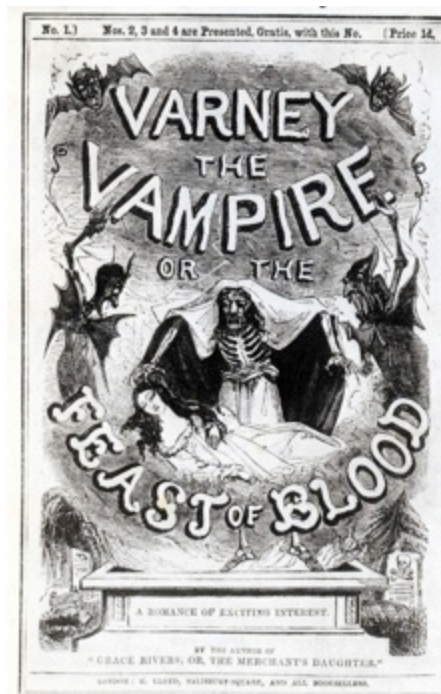


Figure 7: Original cover from penny dreadful *Varney the Vampire or the Feast of Blood* by James Malcolm Rymer and Thomas Peckett Prest (serialised 1845-47 in the United Kingdom).

Even when they drew their themes and images from earlier sources, turn-of-the-century filmmakers and writers experimented with innovative structures and creative methods for bringing their stories to a new modern audience. The stream-of-consciousness writing technique employed by Virginia Wolf, Joseph Conrad and

James Joyce replaced coherent narrative and even orderly sentence structures with the flow of the authors' and characters' mental processes, consisting of thoughts, feelings, memories, references, metaphors, sometimes citations from the authors' previous books, private dairies and letters.

The self-consciousness and fragmentation of thoughts and imagery reflected in modernist art and literature turned the reader, gallery visitor or cinema-goer into an active participant in the recreation of the decomposed images, interpreting the film's or painting's imagery and message. Narrative structure became less important than the mental and emotional process of the author/painter/film director or his or her characters. Film quickly proved to be one of the most versatile media for embodying this fragmentation of consciousness. Experimental films such as 1928's *The Fall of the House of Usher* (Watson and Webber 1928) used short sequences, close-ups of faces and objects and fragments of architectural elements shown under different angles to disrupt the fabric of the narrative. Watson and Webber's *Usher* creates an abstract atmosphere of tragedy, decay and destruction instead of telling a linear story. The juxtaposition of fragmented, symbolically charged images conveys the message of the film without relying on a coherent narrative. Such films were not likely to satisfy the average moviegoer, probably enticing the same audiences as exhibitions of avant-garde painting.

The potential energy inherent in fragmentation, in breaking down the natural world into small pieces, sections, moments or frames and then reconstructing this decomposed world as a new whole was recognised by painters as much as by filmmakers. At the dawn of the 20th century the cubistic paintings created in Paris by Pablo Picasso, from *Les Femmes d'Alger* (1907) to *Femme assise dans un*

fauteuil (Eva) (1913), were meant to provoke, scandalise and find a new viewer. The multitude of viewpoints incorporated into a Cubist image created the illusion of seeing the same object from different angles at the same time, an effect similar to that created effortlessly by a moving camera.



Figure 8: Fragmentation in painting: Pablo Picasso, *Portrait of Ambroise Vollard* (1910), Pushkin Museum of Fine Art, Moscow.



Figure 9: Fragmentation in film: *Fall of the House of Usher* (1928), directed by Melville Webber and James S. Watson. Screen grab taken by author.

The sense of chaos and confusion expressed through the fragmentation of images was vividly reflected in Dadaism and images such as Otto Dix's 1920 painting *The War Cripples* and George Grosz's satirical illustrations in the portfolio *Gott mit Uns* (*God with us*). Collages and photomontages of dozens of images of contemporary life combined photo portraits and newspaper cutouts in the most farcical amalgamations. Some of the Dadaist creations look like film frames chaotically thrown onto a flat surface, echoing the aesthetics and subjects of contemporary film.⁵⁵ While traditional art forms such as painting, printmaking, literature and theatre drew inspiration from film and film form, prominent artists began to experiment with cinema itself, shortening and blurring the distances between media. The world as recreated in art, literature and cinema became a collection of 'broken images' a feeling best conveyed by Eliot: "What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow/Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man, /You cannot say, or guess, for you know only/A heap of broken images..."⁵⁶



Figure 10: Otto Dix, *War Cripples*, 1920, oil on canvas. Lost, presumed destroyed.

⁵⁵ Schrader and Schebera 64.

⁵⁶ T. S. Eliot, "The Waste Land," *The Waste Land and Other Writings* (New York: Random House, 2002).

The new art of the early 1900s departed from the traditional geometrical perspective developed by Renaissance artists. The single vanishing point was eliminated allowing the image or composition of images to fall into a collection of fragments arranged on the surface. Paintings no longer represented a unified scene and became a combination of several scenes that had to be observed separately over a certain time period and combined in the viewer's mind. Sound and music transformed in the same way as images, with traditional tonal harmony disappearing from the creations of composers Arnold Schoenberg and Sergei Stravinsky. The new 12-tone music stopped using only 1 or 2 tones as focal points in musical compositions, employing 12 interrelated tones and eliminating the key centres of tonal music.

Music and silent film played a large part in one another's development at the beginning of the century. In 1926 Schoenberg wrote that the operatic genre was in crisis because it was incapable of competing with the 'realism' and immediacy of film, which had "spoiled the eyes of the spectator."⁵⁷ Music critic Hans Gutman agreed that there was a 'breach' between the public and the presentation of music and "that traditional cultural venues such as symphony concert or opera had ceased to be relevant to audiences."⁵⁸ Such concerns led to operatic reform on numerous levels. Composer Richard Strauss attempted to address the 'breach' between modes of presentation by directly referencing cinematic techniques in operatic productions. His 1916-23 opera *Intermezzo* by transitions abruptly between brief scenes in vastly different locations in a manner reminiscent of cinematic montage. Bryan Gilliam

⁵⁷ Arnold Schoenberg, "Gibt es eine Krise der Oper?," *Musikblätter des Anbruch* 8 1926: 209.

⁵⁸ Hans Gutman, "Young Germany," *Modern Music* 7 1930: 7.

connects Strauss's striving towards fresh modern techniques to a desire to distance himself from Wagnerian opera. Other operatic productions also incorporated cinematic techniques and innovations, including staging entire productions in black-and-white, using film and slide projectors, recreating techniques such as split-screens and montage and even adding projected intertitles.⁵⁹

Early filmmakers, especially the creators of silent Gothic films, worked with operatic material from the beginning, heavily influenced by operatic plots, aesthetics, and themes (effectively rehashing the very same narratives opera houses were reusing), and incorporating classical music into their scoring. Music became a part of the fabric of film and its performance practices. References to opera and classical music also helped to legitimise film as 'art' by bringing it closer to 'higher' and more classical art forms. Although the music and voices within the films were silent, "opera became an example of independence from language. By virtue of the very choice to show images of voiceless opera, silent films of opera expressed a belief in the power of film to offer new ways of understanding the silence and speechlessness of the human voice."⁶⁰ Additionally, historians of opera and its relationship with cinema point out the aesthetic parallels between operatic productions and silent film in their use of grand, often melodramatic narratives artificial settings and extravagant gestural styles.⁶¹ With films borrowing operatic plots, famous opera singers like Enrico Caruso and Feodor Chaliapin appearing on film, and classical composers writing scores for silent film that were performed by full orchestras, the operatic

⁵⁹ Bryan Gilliam, ed. *Music and Performance During the Weimar Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994) 1-12.

⁶⁰ Jeongwon Joe and Rose Theresa, eds. *Between Opera and Cinema* (London: Routledge, 2015) 21.

⁶¹ For more on this topic see Michal Grover-Friedlander, *Vocal Apparitions: The Attraction of Cinema to Opera* (Princeton UP, 2014) 19 and Rachel Cowgill and Hilary Poriss, eds. *The Arts of the Prima Donna in the Long Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford UP, 2012) 83.

establishment provided a great deal of support for the maturing art of film. In return, references to cinematic techniques in staging brought popular appeal and aesthetic freshness to operatic productions.

Dramatic theatre was another performing art that engaged in a cultural and aesthetic interchange with cinema. 1919's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* for instance, shot in an entirely artificial environment filled with distorted, abstract shapes painted on canvases, can easily be compared to a theatrical production. Many contemporary productions used sets inspired by Expressionist painting and emphasised the interconnectedness of the actor and the setting. This is a feature very present in the theories of Bertolt Brecht, a great proponent of the “dynamic actor-set relationship.”⁶² Austrian theatre and film entrepreneur Max Reinhardt transferred his innovative ideas about lighting, set design, and continuity seamlessly between stage and screen. His theories and experiments were a great influence on the work of his former pupil, German silent film director F.W. Murnau. Reinhardt's 1920s production of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* stunned audiences by the unexpected “naturalism” of its forest setting and the use of a revolving stage to maintain a sense of continuity between scenes. The “veritable trees” standing on a stage that was “covered not with a painted ground-cloth, but with what seemed palpable grass, in which the feet sunk among the flowers” created a powerful illusion of reality in a play conventionally associated with fantasy and artifice.⁶³

⁶² David F Kuhns, *German Expressionist Theatre: the Actor and the Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997) 234.

⁶³ Walter Rene Fuerst and Samuel J. Hume, *Twentieth-Century Stage Decoration* (London: Knopf, 1929) 16.



Figure 11: Set design for a 1924 New York production of *The Miracle* directed by Max Reinhardt at the Century Theatre in New York where it ran from 15 January 1924 to 10 November 1925.⁶⁴

As with opera, the film medium ‘gave back’ to theatre, inspiring theatrical directors to look for new, expressive, ‘cinematic’ ways of presenting a play. Reinhardt’s innovative revolving stage allowed his actors and sets to smoothly transition between scenes without interruption, in much the same way that long takes and a moving camera would do in Murnau’s films. Lighting played a dominant role in Reinhardt’s work, allowing him to “achieve that highest form of expression...the cooperation of all factors toward a common goal” through “the synthesis and analysis of all form through light” – another valuable lesson imbibed by his pupil.⁶⁵ Like operas, dramatic productions began to use slides and projected footage as part

⁶⁴ Original illustration from the article “How the Century Theatre was Converted into a Cathedral for the Production of ‘The Miracle’,” published in *Scientific American* in 1924.

⁶⁵ Oliver M. Sayler, ed. *Max Reinhardt and His Theatre*, trans. Mariele S. Gudernatsch (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1924) 111.

of a live performance as early as the 1920s. The sudden rise in the popularity of pantomime in early 20th century Germany could also be connected with the growing popular appeal of silent film. Reinhardt staged several productions relying exclusively on facial expression and body language to tell a story, creating brilliant examples of silent theatre.

The image of the literary monster was already ubiquitous in the performing arts even before the emergence of cinema through numerous stage adaptations of Gothic novels. It is enlightening to observe how many of the actors cast as monsters were already known as epic or romantic leads rather than villains or character actors. S. S. Praver traces the pattern of casting “personable actors” in “grotesque and macabre” roles to popular nineteenth century stage adaptations of Gothic novels, including *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*.⁶⁶ A similar approach to the monster’s allure is also evident in the enormously popular 1887 Thomas Russell Sullivan stage adaptation of *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, featuring Richard Mansfield in the dual role⁶⁷. All of these productions and their angle on monstrosity were to have a profound effect on the cinematic monster figure.

The language of film continued to evolve and mature through its encounters and exchanges with theatre, music, and visual arts throughout the first few decades of its existence and beyond. Such major artistic movements as Expressionism, Surrealism, and The International Style manifested themselves in in all forms of art, simultaneously defining the language of ‘art film’ as well. German Expressionism with its distorted views, extreme angles, dark shadows and monstrous grotesque

⁶⁶ Siegbert Salomon Praver, *Caligari’s Children : the Film as Tale of Terror* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1980) 1.

⁶⁷ Jonathan Rigby, *American Gothic: Sixty Years of Horror Cinema* (London: Reynolds & Hearn, 2007) 12-13; Skal, *Monster Show* 139.

imagery became a valuable tool for reflecting the shattering experience of World War I in art and film. Film and the other arts shared both an overall visual style and themes such as the agonising anxiety of the sinful city versus the healing power and spiritual freedom of nature, the horrors of destruction and mutilation, mental breakdowns and madness. In 1909, Expressionist groups emerged in Munich and Dresden, precursors of the *Blaue Reiter* group, which formed in 1911. Franz Marc, Paul Klee, August, Vassily Kandinsky and many others inspired by Matisse and the French *Les Fauves*, stated that “in our era of great struggle for the new art we are fighting ‘wild’ ...against an old organised power. The struggle appears uneven, but in spiritual matters it is never the quantity, but the strength of ideas which wins.”⁶⁸

At the dawn of the Weimar Republic, Germany was still expressing itself through the voices of Expressionist artists. In 1918 the Expressionist movement re-formed into the Novembergruppe under the slogan Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, for a free Germany and against the obsolete past. The members of the group were writers, musicians sculptors, architects and painters as well as theatre designers and filmmakers. Using distorted, exaggerated, grotesque images they were able to convey the national despair and emotional and physical suffering of a country trying to recover from a murderous war. Max Beckmann’s painting *Die Nacht* summarised these feelings in a scene of a family being tortured and raped by a violent gang in the darkness of the night. The linear, angular compositions and sharp contrasts favoured by Expressionists translated with particular strength in woodcuts such as Karl Jacob Hirsch’s *Aufschrei* (1920) and in film.

⁶⁸ Franz Marc, “Die ‘Wilden’ in Deutschland,” *Der Blaue Reiter* 1912.



Figure 12: Max Beckmann, *Die Nacht (The Night)*, oil on canvas, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Dusseldorf.



Figure 13: Karl Jacob Hirsch, *Aufschrei*, woodcut (1919). The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York.

The sets for *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Weine, 1919), designed by Hermann Warm, Walter Röhrig and Walter Reimann worked in remarkable consonance with

the gestures and poses of the actors, creating a world of dark mystery, hidden danger and madness. *Caligari*, *Der Golem* (Wegener and Galeen 1920), *Nosferatu* (Murnau 1922), *Waxworks* (Leni 1924), the *Dr. Mabuse* trilogy, (Lang 1922/33) *M* (Lang 1931), *Variety* (Dupont 1925), *Joyless Street* (Pabst 1925), *Die Nibelungen* (Lang 1924), F.W. Murnau's *Faust* and Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (both 1926) are among the films most frequently cited in the context of the Expressionist movement in film. The list is not long, but the artistic vision they display and the legacy they have left behind are remarkable. As Hollywood's interest in the 'German style' developed, a number of directors (Ernst Lubitsch and F.W. Murnau), actors (Emil Jannings, Conrad Veidt, Marlene Dietrich), cinematographers (Karl Freund), and many others continued their work in the United States.



Figure 14: Expressionist-influenced set design in *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Wiene, 1919). Publicity still. Murnau-Stiftung.

Stylistic approaches to film sets were linked to the architectural developments of the time as well as contemporary artistic movements. The so-called 'International Style' that emerged in 1920s architecture favoured simple geometric shapes and clean, even transparent structures built of steel, glass and concrete with no applied ornamentation. Walter Gropius and Bauhaus in Germany and Le Corbusier in France found beauty in simplicity and functionality. The International Style and Russian Constructivism generated new approaches to industrial/urban design. These styles are strikingly mirrored and reinterpreted in the sets of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1926), evoking a soulless, industrial universe that enslaves people and turns them into robots.

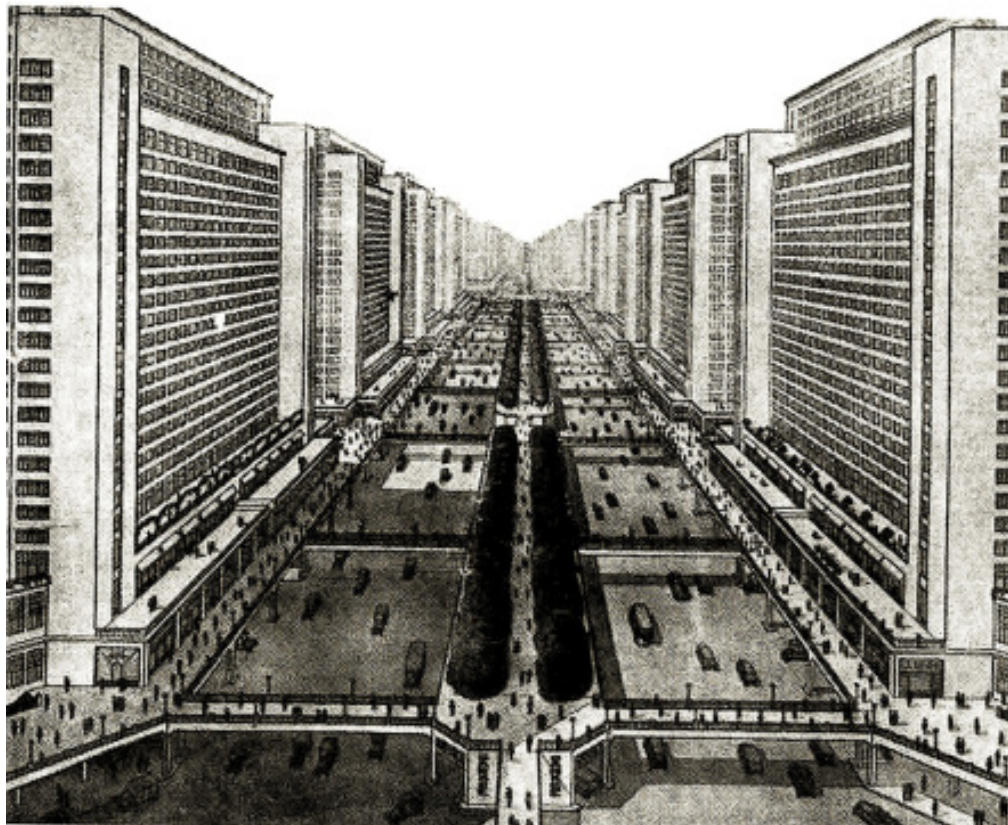


Figure 15: "Exact Air," from Le Corbusier's *Radiant City* (1930), drawing.



Figure 16: Publicity still showing set design in *Metropolis* (UFA 1927), directed by Fritz Lang

Older artistic movements also left their mark on experimental films of the 1920s, such as Watson and Webber's *Fall of the House of Usher* (1928). Speaking of impressionist painting, art historian Arnold Hauser stresses the *subjectivity* and *mobility* of the impressionist approach to time and matter, in which the "stable and coherent" becomes the "unfinished and the fragmentary", the moment dominates "permanence and continuity", and "reality is not a being but a becoming, not a condition but a process."⁶⁹ Watson and Webber's film also 'decomposed the shape of matter' to 'transform its substance into energy'. Making an intermedial comparison between the paintings of Monet and the music of Claude Debussy, Stefan Jarocinski identifies a goal common to both - the use of creative means to look beyond external

⁶⁹ Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art, Vol. 4: Naturalism, Impressionism, the Film Age* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962) 159-60.

appearances and reveal the impression created on the individual artist. He refers to this process as responding to the “most secret language and most intimate confidences” of objects “capturing their irradiations and listening to their inner voices. For things see, things speak, things have a soul.”⁷⁰ This approach is echoed in *Usher*’s ‘musical’ editing style.

In sum, developing in close interconnection with the other arts, silent film was a new art form with its own set of rules, its own type of space, and new ways of constructing a character’s physical presence. While theatrical modes of performance and representation could serve as a core on which to build, they could not deal effectively with the new compositional demands of the cinematic frame, the various perspectives offered by the camera, the proximity of the close-up, the continuity concerns attendant upon film editing, and of course the emotive challenges of non-verbal expression. Its power was in its internationalism and wide distribution. The language of silent film was heard and understood all over the world. It rapidly became an unparalleled part of the growing mass culture, reaching different ages, genders, and social groups, reflecting their thoughts, feelings, ideas and aesthetic values. Different types of films targeted different viewers but even the more elite ‘art films’ reached sizeable audiences and became an important part of world art and culture in the early 20th century. The following chapters will demonstrate how all of these political, cultural, artistic and scientific factors contributed to the construction, design and creation of the Silent Era cinematic monster. The choice of the eight

⁷⁰ Stefan Jarocinski, *Debussy: Impressionism and Symbolism* (London: Eulenberg Books, 1976) 20.

monster characters presented in this research is based on the frequency of a given character's appearances in silent film and/or the artistic quality of relevant films.

Chapter II - Literary Archetypes of Silent Era Monsters

This thesis focuses on Silent Era monster characters derived from literary sources with a primary emphasis on eight specific literary works: *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* by Victor Hugo, *The Phantom of the Opera* by Gaston Leroux, *Dracula* by Bram Stoker, *The Man Who Laughs* by Victor Hugo, *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, *The Fall of the House of Usher* by Edgar Allan Poe, *The Hands of Orlac* by Maurice Renard. In the transfer from page to screen these literary sources underwent significant alterations in narrative structure which will be discussed in detail in this chapter. Retold in the emerging and rapidly developing language of silent film, they are not so much adaptations as cultural appropriations with the films often only inspired by literary sources. For this reason many existing models in adaption studies – a large, interdisciplinary field - have only limited applicability to this corpus. The films under discussion were often not intended in any way as complete interpretations of the source novels, their styles, plotlines, and full sets of characters in a different medium. Taking a particular character (the monster in this case), they may build an altered plot around him, add new characters that were not present in the original, shift the thematic emphasis, subvert the generic context of the source, or use the literary original's monster figure as a metaphor for concerns and anxieties that are more relevant to the cultural and historical contexts of the film than those of the original novel. The films analysed often engage more directly with a given monster character as a cultural/mythological archetype than with the fabric of the literary

work from which he originates. In fact, they frequently incorporate plotlines and even characters from other literary and mythological sources at the same time.

Thus terms such as “translation” or “borrowing” may be more appropriate than “adaptation” in analysing these films and their relationships with their literary sources. The term ‘translation’ as used by Robert Stam and Lawrence Venuti in the context of adaptation studies comes close to defining this kind of relationship. In “Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation” (2000), Stam argues against ‘fidelity’ as useful trope, proposing ‘translation’ instead - “a principled effort of intersemiotic transposition, with the inevitable losses and gains typical of any translation.”⁷¹ He points out that an adaptation can be seen as “an ongoing dialogical process” in which each adaptation can shed “a new cultural light on the novel.”⁷² Venuti, in his article “Adaptation, Translation, Critique” (2007), also uses the term ‘translation’, applying some of the principles of translating between languages in a literary sense. He emphasises that the connection may be not only ‘interpretive’ but also ‘interrogative’, revealing the cultural and social conditions of both the source and its adaptation and the way these conditions clash or enrich one another.⁷³ Both of these discussions apply to many of the films included in this thesis but some films take their adaptive approach to an even greater level of abstraction. This level echoes the use of certain themes and images in media other than film, as outlined in Dudley Andrew’s 1984 discussion on the three modes of adaptation. In “Adaptation,” Andrew lists fidelity of transformation, intersection, and borrowing as the three core

⁷¹ Robert Stam, “Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation,” *Film Adaptation*, ed. James Naremore (London: Athlone Press, 2000) 54–76. 62

⁷² Stam 63.

⁷³ Lawrence Venuti, “Adaptation, Translation, Critique,” *Journal of Visual Culture* 1 Apr. 2007: 25–43.

methods for adapting themes and concepts between media.⁷⁴ He labels “borrowing” as the most frequently seen in the history of the arts in general, illustrating this concept with the use of Biblical narratives and characters in medieval paintings. In such cases the original source is used “as a continuing form or archetype in culture.”⁷⁵ This approach can be taken even more broadly to encompass the deeper literary, mythic, and symbolic roots of both the films and their designated literary source texts.

Each of the above-listed literary sources created a monster character who had a lasting impact on Silent Era cinema and beyond. Although the films analysed in this thesis cover a span of three decades of film history, they are bound by shared patterns developed for the representation of a given monster figure on screen. The scope of Silent Era adaptations for each monster figure and the patterns of narrative alteration that were developed for them will be explored on a case-by-case basis. The list of films provided in each case is the result of a thorough examination of numerous films with possible ties to a given literary source. From the earliest days of cinema, literary material provided the advantage of a ready-made plot, a built-in audience and a veneer of sophistication for a medium still fighting to prove its cultural and artistic validity. Studios could go to great lengths to ensure access to respected literary sources, from shooting unauthorised adaptations like F.W. Murnau’s *Nosferatu* (1922), to contracting popular authors for their current and future literary output, as in the case of Selma Lagerlöf and Swedish film production company AB Svensk Filmindustri.⁷⁶ Alternatively, some films would incorporate distinctive character names such as ‘Dr. Jekyll’ or ‘Esmeralda’, or even the names of

⁷⁴ Dudley Andrew, “Adaptation” in *Concepts in Film Theory* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1984) 96–106.

⁷⁵ Andrew 98.

⁷⁶ Aleksander Kwiatkowski, *Swedish Film Classics* (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1983) vi.

the authors themselves entirely out of context. Evocative words like ‘hunchback,’ ‘musketeer’ or ‘vampire’ could be tacked onto random titles with minimal relevance to the plot, exclusively for marketing purposes. Sometimes fragments of plot or characterisation are recognisable, but more often these films bear little or no connection to the novels they reference and are only exploiting familiar associations. Between the rampant misuse of familiar names and titles for their publicity value and the unauthorised pilfering of literary plots with altered names and titles, it can be difficult to determine whether a particular film is meant to be viewed as an adaptation or not.

II.1. Jekyll and Hyde

Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) was perhaps the most frequently filmed Gothic literary work in the Silent Era, and has retained its appeal to this day. At least 29 film adaptations of the novella were made internationally between 1897 and 1929. This number does not include the numerous stage adaptations directly based on or at least inspired by it, from the popular 1887 production by Richard Mansfield and Thomas Russell Sullivan (only a year after the novella’s publication), to the 1897 version by George Fish and Luella Forepaugh, Paul Lindau’s 1893 play *Der Andere* (*The Other*), and many others in between. The 29 film adaptations identified so far show a range of approaches to the material and interpretations of the central, dualistic image of Jekyll and Hyde. Many of the films maintain close narrative ties with Stevenson’s original, freely incorporating some of the plot modifications and characters introduced by the

theatrical adaptations. A few introduce their own twists and deviations, changing the names and settings, and sometimes even the method and purpose of Jekyll's transformation, as is the case with F. W. Murnau's unauthorised 1920 adaptation, *Der Januskopf* (*The Head of Janus*). Despite the wide range of approaches to the material, certain persistently recurring patterns of interpretation and representation were passed on from film to film, and highlighted in parody versions. Some of these patterns emerged as early as the 1887 Sullivan and Mansfield play, while others developed in response to the demands of cinema. Frequently transcending genre and style, they quickly solidified into conventions, constructing a new Jekyll and Hyde image, tailor-made for the silent film medium and different in many ways from the character envisioned by Stevenson.

In terms of narrative structure, the most significant and consistent of these patterns is a radical perspective shift that changes the psychological emphasis of the story, simultaneously discarding the novella's central mystery. Stevenson's literary original is, after all, called *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, implying that there is a "case" and labelling the tale as a mystery. It is significant that none of the numerous silent film adaptations used the full title, preferring simply "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" or a less obvious but still suggestive version such as "The Duality of Man", "The Head of Janus", "Horrible Hyde", or "The Fateful Invention", with only the 1914 German film *Ein Seltsamer Fall* (*A Strange Case*) implying any sort of mystery. Understandably, with this many adaptations of the novella on stage and screen from 1887 onwards, it could hardly be expected that the identity of Edward Hyde would truly be a mystery to anyone. Without the element of mystery the films were free to dispense with Stevenson's original externalised perspective (in the form

of Jekyll's lawyer Utterson), in favour of a more personalised first-person view of the action. The revelation of Jekyll's experiments and his first transformation become a central feature of the opening scene rather than a confession at the very end. This approach allows for a much deeper insight into Jekyll's character and motivations, presenting the action directly from his perspective and inviting the viewer to share his experiences as they occur rather than in retrospect. This alteration also provides the opportunity to present Jekyll's struggle with his own duality as a visual narrative and avoid lengthy verbal exposition, which would likely have been visually and dramatically cumbersome in a silent film.

This heightened emphasis on Jekyll's perspective brought with it a need to explore his character and motivations on a deeper level, and question the extent of his accountability for the consequences of his experiment. In other words, is Jekyll an irresponsible, self-indulgent villain, a tragic victim of society and human frailty, or a martyr to scientific progress? Different films approach the answer in slightly different ways, casting more or less of a shadow on what is portrayed as Jekyll's moral and even spiritual integrity and adherence to traditional Victorian social conventions.

The 1912 version (directed by Lucius Henderson and starring James Cruze) for instance, hints at associations with drug addiction, showing Jekyll's increasing dependence on the potion and even implying withdrawal symptoms. King Baggott's Jekyll (1913, directed by Herbert Brenon) is much more straightforwardly virtuous, with particular attention paid to his charity work, the expansion of a fleeting hint picked up in Stevenson. He is all but cleared of the sin of indulgence and addiction, as most of his onscreen transformations occur spontaneously, without the use of the

potion. These two versions clearly illustrate the two basic types of Jekyll seen in silent film adaptations – the ‘Addicted Jekyll’ and the ‘Possessed Jekyll.’ While both types commit heinous crimes and lead debauched lifestyles as Hyde and generally die by their own hand overwhelmed by guilt, their responsibility for their actions is assessed differently.

The Addicted Jekyll is a victim of temptation, whether it is lust, ambition, or curiosity, and more of his transformations are shown as voluntary and conscious. Cruze’s Jekyll continues to take the transformative formula even after some regrettable incidents occur. Alwin Neuss’s 1914 incarnation (*Ein Seltsamer Fall*, directed by Max Mack) goes a step further, willingly abandoning his social obligations and connections to live an alternate life, with his own bar in a seedy neighbourhood and an attractive barmaid. The Possessed Jekyll, although he invariably triggers the first transformation with a conscious action, is compelled into future transformations by a stronger force that he cannot control. In Brenon/Baggott it is Hyde himself, the dark side of Jekyll’s soul. Conrad Veidt’s version of Jekyll in F.W. Murnau’s *Der Januskopf* (1920) is controlled by a sculptural bust of the ancient two-faced god Janus. Albert Basserman’s Jekyll-esque lawyer Hallers, in *Der Andere* (1913, directed by Max Mack) suffers from the somnambulistic side effects of a head injury. The 1920 Sheldon Lewis version (directed by Charles J. Hayden), both Alwin Neuss films (1910, directed by August Blom and 1914, directed by Max Mack), and a few of the comic versions avoid confronting Jekyll’s guilt altogether by ultimately revealing that the whole story had just been a bad dream.

Another factor affecting Jekyll’s decisions and his presentation to the viewer is the introduction of a romantic subplot. The original novella features no major female

characters, so this addition stems directly from the 1887 Sullivan and Mansfield production. All of the adaptations discussed in this research introduce at least one female character, who is usually Jekyll's sweetheart and/or fiancée. She represents the purity of heart that Jekyll has lost and acts as a foil against the corrupting influence of Hyde. Max Mack's *Ein Seltsamer Fall* (1914, starring Alwin Neuß) complicates the relationship dynamic further by pairing a fallen and amoral woman with its Hyde figure. The device of contrasting female foils recurs in later films such as John S. Robertson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1920), starring John Barrymore and crosses over into sound film with Rouben Mamoulian's 1931 adaptation with Frederic March.

The lengthy, elaborately plotted Robertson/Barrymore⁷⁷ film incorporates all of the above features and adds an additional element to Jekyll's multi-layered nature by directly referencing another Gothic monster. A number of plot twists and characters are borrowed from Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. The topic of intertextual borrowing in Silent Era literary monster films will be discussed at length in Chapter IV, "The Duality of the Silent Film Monster".

II.2. Dracula

The publication of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* in the United Kingdom in 1897 heralded the creation of one of the most frequently-filmed literary characters in

⁷⁷ Many of the films discussed throughout the thesis share similar or identical titles, often the titles of their literary sources. For ease of reference an abbreviation will be used for most mentions of a given film after its first full citation, using the last names of the director and the actor playing the role of the central monster figure. For example, after the first mention of John S. Robertson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1920), starring John Barrymore, it will be referred to as Robertson/Barrymore. Other cast/crew names, dates of release, and title references will be appended where relevant to the discussion and in cases where it may otherwise be unclear which monster is being referred to.

world cinema. Since its publication, *Dracula* has been translated into thirty different languages, although only a few of these translations were made during Stoker's lifetime. Perhaps the earliest known non-English language edition is Valdimar Ásmundsson's 1901 Icelandic version, *Makt Myrkanna* (*Powers of Darkness*). In 1908, *Dracula* was translated into German by Heinz Widtmann and in 1920 it was translated into French and Italian⁷⁸. Written in the form of an epistolary novel, *Dracula* centres around the mysterious and supernatural figure of a vampiric Romanian count who arrives in late-19th century London spreading death and destruction. Told entirely through diary entries, letters and newspaper clippings, the novel weaves together the viewpoints of multiple characters of different backgrounds, genders and social classes. These diverse narrators enable the story to encompass a range of modern social issues such as the role of women in society, immigration, colonialism, contagion, attitudes towards mental illness, and sexual repression, alongside broader mythological themes such as death and resurrection, personal damnation, Otherness, and duality.

In his extensive study of *Dracula* and its numerous adaptations, David Skal speculates that although "Stoker never published his thoughts on the motion picture or its possible future...his work often makes use of up-to-date inventions; *Dracula*, for instance, includes references to the Kodak camera, the telephone, the portable typewriter, and updates the epistolary form with transcriptions of Dr. Seward's phonograph diary. It is reasonable to assume that the creator of *Dracula* would have

⁷⁸ *Dracula* was translated into Icelandic by Valdimar Ásmundsson (*Makt Myrkanna* (*Powers of Darkness*), trans. Valdimar Ásmundsson (Reykjavík: Prentud í Félagsprentsmidjunni, 1901). Preface by Bram Stoker.); into German in 1908 by Heinz Widtmann as *Dracula* (*Dracula*, trans. Heinz Widtmann (Leipzig: Max Altmann, 1908); into French in 1920 by Eve and Lucie Paul-Marguerite as *Dracula, l'homme de la nuit*; and into Italian in 1920 (*Dracula. L'uomo della notte*, trans. A. Nessi (Milano: Sonzogno, 1922)).

been as intrigued by the possibilities of film as film would later become intrigued with *Dracula*.⁷⁹ Stoker's widow responded aggressively to F.W. Murnau's unauthorised 1922 *Dracula* adaptation, *Nosferatu*, but she did authorise a 1924 stage version by Irish actor, playwright and director Hamilton Deane. Deane's *Dracula, the Vampire Play*, was later revised by John L. Balderston for a 1927 Broadway production starring Bela Lugosi, who reprised the role in 1931 for the first authorised film adaptation.

Direct and intentional references to *Dracula*, its plot and characters can be traced in only two silent films, although the possibility of other lost or obscure adaptations should not be discarded. Of these two films, the most widely known is F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922), starring Max Schrek. Although *Nosferatu* is frequently cited as the earliest cinematic adaptation of Stoker's novel, this may not be the case. One of the earliest documented films to reference the name *Dracula* is in fact an obscure and now lost 1921 Hungarian film - *Drakula halála (Dracula's Death)*, directed by Károly Lajthay and starring Paul Askonas. Although the film's character names and plot diverge significantly from *Dracula*, it seems it *was* actually planned as an interpretation of the novel. A 1921 announcement in the Hungarian trade publication *Képes Mozivilág*, (while misattributing the novel to H.G. Wells), states that Károly Lajthay is working on a film incorporating the "basic ideas" of *Dracula*, which was published in Hungary "about twenty years ago" and was "highly acclaimed."⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Skal, *Hollywood Gothic* 25-6.

⁸⁰ "Drakula – Károly Lajthay's Latest Film (1921)," *Képes Mozivilág* 16 Jan. 1921.



Figure 17: Poster for *Drakula halála* (*Dracula's Death*) (1921), directed by Károly Lajthay. Lost film.



Figure 18: Poster for *Nosferatu* (Jofa-Atelier Berlin-Johannisthal, Prana-Film GmbH 1922), directed by F.W. Murnau. Poster designed by Albin Grau, 1922. Copy acquired by author from the Deutsches Kinemathek.

A great deal of material is preserved on *Nosferatu*, including stills, production photos, publicity materials, reviews, various drafts of the script and several versions of the full film, slightly altered and re-edited for release in different countries and

venues.⁸¹ The fact that feature-length prints of the film survive at all is extremely fortunate. As Murnau did not officially contact the Stoker estate or pay for the right to use the novel, Florence Stoker was able to successfully sue him for copyright infringement. All prints of the film were meant to be destroyed by court order and only those that were hidden or smuggled away were saved. In contrast, *Drakula halála* leaves behind no known footage. Most of the information obtainable on the film comes from four production stills showing glimpses of the sets and Dracula's makeup, and a novelisation by Lajos Páncézl called *The Death of Drakula: A Novella of the Phantasy Film*. The stills and an English translation of the novella are reprinted in full in the *Horror Studies* article "Drakula halála (1921): The Cinema's First Dracula" by Gary D. Rhodes.⁸²

Although some of the alterations introduced in *Nosferatu* and *Drakula halála* can be interpreted as artistic licence or creative reinterpretation, some are based primarily on legal constraints; the first film legally able to use *Dracula*'s title, character names and plot was the 1931 Browning/Lugosi sound version. Trying to shield their unauthorised adaptation, Murnau and screenwriter Henrik Galeen tweaked each name just enough to render it unrecognisable. Thus, young solicitor Jonathan Harker became Jonathan Hutter, his fiancée Mina became his wife Ellen and Count Dracula himself was renamed Count Orlok. The only entity that somehow escaped with its name intact was the *Demeter* - the schooner that brought Dracula to England. As for the film's title (*Nosferatu*), David Skal, asserts that it is actually "a meaningless word widely believed to be a Romanian term for 'vampire,'" and is the result of an accidental corruption in "folklorist Emily de Laszowska Gerard's 1885 essay

⁸¹ Lotte H Eisner, "L'énigme des deux Nosferatu," *Cahiers du cinema* Jan. 1958: 22–24.

⁸² Gary D Rhodes, "Drakula halla (1921): The Cinema's First Dracula," *Horror Studies* 1 Jan. 2010: 25–47.

‘Transylvanian Superstitions,’ which novelist Bram Stoker consulted in his research for *Dracula*.’⁸³ Considering Murnau’s thorough and researched approach to filmmaking, it is possible to assume that he explored some of Stoker’s original sources hoping to enrich his own understanding and vision of the material.

Stoker’s use of the epistolary form allows him to bring together a large group of interconnected characters with individual voices and unique contributions to the broader narrative framework. In the more concise format of a feature film, this expansive cast of characters is invariably cut down by fifty percent or more. The decisions made in these two early adaptations, especially *Nosferatu*, lay down patterns for the merging, omission, or modification of certain characters that would become conventional for later versions. Although all the names are altered, *Nosferatu* preserves far more explicit references to the novel’s core characters than *Drakula halála*. While *Nosferatu*’s Count Orlock is meant to be an actual vampire, *Drakula halála*’s subversive retelling turns him into a delusional madman whose supernatural abilities exist only in dreams and hallucinations. Ellen Hutter in *Nosferatu* and Mary Land in *Drakula halála* are both composite heroines, fusing the novel’s two main female characters - Mina Harker, who edits and mediates all of the other characters narratives, and her feminine, flirtatious best friend Lucy Westenra, who is victimised and destroyed by Dracula’s influence. Both films excise Lucy’s colourful collection of suitors, with *Drakula halála* featuring a single generic fiancée who plays no role in the plot, and *Nosferatu* keeping a version of Jonathan Harker. The suppression of the novel’s vampire expert Dr. Abraham Van Helsing as an active character leaves the heroine virtually unsupported by any strong, male

⁸³ David J. Skal, *V Is for Vampire: The A-Z Guide to Everything Undead* (London: Robson, 1996) 154.

authority figures. In both films, this drastic reduction in supporting characters and subplots leaves Dracula as the dominant male figure and his relationship with the heroine becomes the focal point of the narrative.

Despite drastically reducing the number of characters, Murnau attempts to reproduce Stoker's multiple-POV-structure in *Nosferatu*, intercutting between scenes occurring in different locations just as Stoker intersperses letters and diary entries written simultaneously in different countries. As in the novel, Jonathan's journey to Transylvania, first encounter with the vampire and his castle, and eventual escape are shown from his perspective. In the second half of the film, the central viewpoint character is Ellen. Unlike Stoker, Murnau includes several scenes that hint strongly at Dracula/Count Orlock's POV as well. Stoker's Dracula communicates with the reader only through the records of other characters, his words tinted by their memories and framed by their thoughts and assumptions. Murnau furnishes him with brief moments of isolated, wordless screen time that leave him alone with the audience, unfiltered through the perceptions of diegetic mediators. *Drakula halála* privileges the perspective of its central female protagonist, building its plotlines around her version of events as well as her nightmares and hallucinations. The latter seem to be heavily informed by Drakula's influence, hinting obliquely at his perspective as well.

Deconstructing the novel, *Nosferatu* and *Drakula halála* both chose the angles and episodes that best fulfil their broader narrative goals, reinventing the story for a new era and a new audience. In both cases this is done by emphasising the symbolic, mythological and fantastic overtones of the story and foregrounding the dualistic relationship between Mina/Ellen/Mary and Dracula/Count Orlock/Drakula. This has

become a prominent attribute of later *Dracula* adaptations. *Drakula halála* defines the bond between Mary and Drakula by referencing *The Phantom of the Opera* - the madman turns out to be her former singing teacher, once a brilliant organist and composer. Their shared past and Drakula's increasing influence on Mary's dreams and visions illustrate the film's preoccupation with themes of insanity, hypnotism, and loss of identity. Murnau's *Nosferatu* views the Ellen-Orlock dynamic more globally, examining the value of personal sacrifice in a universal battle between hope and destruction.

Jo Leslie Collier compares the films of Murnau to the operas of Richard Wagner, asserting that both recurrently feature "the redemption of the male by the loving sacrifice of the female."⁸⁴ She defines Murnau's female characters as "female eunuchs" and "asexual madonnas" who subliminally long to "shed the halo that has been thrust upon [them]" and assert their position as active and co-equal sexual partner[s].⁸⁵ Ellen does indeed sacrifice herself to redeem her husband and the rest of her plague-stricken town, but she also redeems the vampire from his curse. It is this final aspect that elevates her actions above Collier's narrowly gendered interpretation. A key gesture cut from the script sheds more light on Ellen's agency in relation to Count Orlock. In an earlier draft of the final scene, Orlock pulls away from Ellen at the approach of sunrise, but she takes the initiative, embracing him and pulling him back.⁸⁶ She relinquishes the role of passive martyr and actively participates in a ritual that will end in her death and Dracula's salvation from an eternity of loneliness, darkness, and destruction.

⁸⁴ Jo Leslie Collier, *From Wagner to Murnau: The Transposition of Romanticism From Stage to Screen* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1988) 106.

⁸⁵ Collier 109-30.

⁸⁶ A shooting script for *Nosferatu* is reprinted in full by Eisner in Lotte H Eisner, *Murnau* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1973) at the end of the book.

This gesture is missing from the finished film, but the fact that Ellen dies in the film (in contrast to the novel) perhaps suggests that the true value of her sacrifice transcends the possibility of simple domestic bliss afterwards. Murnau's association of plague imagery with the vampire's arrival gives him a malignant monumentality akin to that of Mephisto in Murnau's later film *Faust* (1926). Like Mephisto, Orlock is an embodiment of personal disaffection and a vehicle of large-scale annihilation - both very pertinent themes for a post-WWI audience. In the 25 years that elapsed between the novel and the film, the world had undergone profound changes and the novel's bittersweet but harmonious ending was no longer compelling enough. By willingly sacrificing herself, Ellen shows that an unremarkable but courageous individual can save her world from an oppressive and powerful evil force, that evil can be freed from itself, and that redemption is still possible.

Another key plot element whose significance shifts in the transfer to film is the theme of insanity. Although psychiatrist/asylum director Dr. John Seward is cut along with Lucy's other suitors, the asylum setting and the character of the deranged patient R.M. Renfield are referenced in both films. In the novel, the realm of the insane is contained in a restricted environment, threatening to spill out but safely conquered by rationality. In *Nosferatu*, and even more in *Drakula halála*, the infection spreads to the film's entire universe. Knock, *Nosferatu*'s Renfield character, is a figure of authority when the film begins and is responsible for sending Hutter to Transylvania. His insanity is a gradual process, induced by Orlock's arrival. Ellen is able to triumph because she keeps her clarity of mind in the face of Orlock's hypnotic influence. Knock loses his identity entirely and becomes the vampire's slave, tracing a clear link between the influence of evil and the advent of

lunacy. The utilisation of images of insanity and asylums to represent loss of identity, tyranny and oppression was explored powerfully in *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* only a few years previously. *Caligari*'s influence on *Nosferatu* is more subtle, but it serves as a template for *Drakula halála*.

Set in an insane asylum, *Drakula* conflates Renfield directly with Dracula himself and insidiously deconstructs the borders between the mentally ill and the supposedly healthy. Abducted by a madman claiming to be a vampire, the innocent and virtuous Mary finds herself in an ancient castle, where she is promised immortality if she becomes one of Drakula's brides. As the story assumes a surrealistic pitch, she awakes to find the whole thing was a dream. As in *Caligari*, the film's frightening supernatural elements are negated by the framing device, but both *Caligari*'s menacing doctor and *Drakula*'s lunatic persist in the "real" world as well. Drakula's death at the hands of another inmate and Mary's reunion with her fiancée aren't enough to fully restore normalcy.⁸⁷ Mary's bizarre dream is a product of her fantasy after all, and the presence of her father at the asylum strongly hints at hereditary insanity. Even in the "real world" the asylum is overrun by deranged patients parading as doctors and real doctors who seem unable to control them or keep them from murdering one another. The line between the rational and the fantastic is almost invisible.

Setting plays an important symbolic role in *Nosferatu* and *Drakula halála*, but both replace the original setting of the novel. Beginning with Jonathan Harker's journey to Transylvania, Stoker's *Dracula* unfolds primarily in London and Whitby, England in Stoker's present day. Murnau preserves Transylvania as the location of

⁸⁷ Rhodes 25-47.

Count Orlock's castle, but moves the main action from England to Wisborg, Germany. He does not modernise the time frame, leaving it in the late 1800s. Lajos Páncézl's novelisation of *Drakula halála* describes the location as "a little Alpine village" with an insane asylum in a nearby city.⁸⁸ No other location or time frame reference is provided. Such radical changes in setting accordingly change the natural and social environment of the narrative as well as the nationality of the characters. Seemingly a significant digression from the novel, this trend actually ensures faithfulness to one of Stoker's main themes - the invasion of the familiar and mundane by the foreign and exotic. By shifting the areas of invasion closer to home, Murnau and Lajthay made their films more immediate for their audiences just as Stoker had done for his.

II.3. Erik, the Phantom of the Opera

The Phantom of the Opera, by French author and journalist Gaston Leroux was originally published in French in serialised form in late 1909 and first translated into English in 1911. Set in late 19th century Paris, the plot centres around Erik, a deformed musical genius hiding in the subterranean vaults of the Paris Opera House and Christine, an aspiring young singer who becomes his secret pupil and protégé. Christine's suitor and childhood friend, Raoul, acts a foil for the shadowy and emotionally unbalanced Erik, forcing Christine to choose between a conventional romantic relationship and an illustrious operatic career.

⁸⁸ Rhodes 32.

The novel incorporates a concoction of themes and motifs popular in Gothic literature since the 1700s, including a haunted building; a series of seemingly supernatural occurrences with a rational (and usually tragic) explanation; the relationship between congenital abnormality and criminal potential; and a mystery plot tinged with romance. Following the example of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), Leroux fused modern themes and characters with references to pervasive mythic archetypes such as Faust, Beauty and the Beast and the Ancient Greek Underworld. This flexible but distinctively recognisable symbolic framework has allowed the story to be adapted and appropriated for a variety of different time periods and cultural contexts. Its grand, operatic setting and extravagant, disfigured anti-hero also provide fertile ground for striking visuals and beautiful music. Surprisingly, despite its recent publication date in the context of Silent Era cinema, the novel was not widely known or frequently adapted at the time of its release.

Currently, only three Silent Era films can be identified as more directly influenced by Leroux's novel than by alternate sources: *The Phantom of the Violin* (1914), starring and directed by Francis Ford; *Das Phantom der Oper* (1916), starring Nils Olaf Chrisander and directed by Ernst Matray; and *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925), starring Lon Chaney and directed by Rupert Julian. For purposes of analysis, references to the 1943 sound adaptation directed by Arthur Lubin and starring Claude Rains will also be made. Although a sound film and later in date than the overall corpus of this thesis, it displays certain features that are useful for comparative purposes. Produced by Universal, like the Julian/Chaney film, it was planned as a remake of the earlier film and was shot using the same sets. Torn between silent film approaches to monstrous representation and the demands of new

technologies, this film is an interesting transitional case that maintains strong ties to its silent predecessor.



Figure 19: Poster for *The Phantom of the Opera* (Universal 1925), directed by Rupert Julian.

Of the three silent films, only the Julian/Chaney version is available to view, along with a wealth of information and publicity materials. It exists in several different cuts with slight variations in intertitles, use of colour and inclusion of certain scenes. Numerous reviews, first-person accounts and publicity photos survive, as well as a series of stills from an alternative ending that was replaced in the film's theatrical release. Ford's *The Phantom of the Violin* is considered a lost film. *Moving Picture World* and *Motion Picture News* published reviews and summaries in September and October of 1914, respectively. The *Moving Picture World* article by Hanford C. Judson provides a particularly detailed account of the film's plot, accompanied by a still that shows the two main characters and a glimpse of one of the sets. Further details of the plot are available from a novelisation by

Victor Rousseau Emanuel (writing under the pseudonym H.M. Egbert), ordered by Universal for publicity purposes.⁸⁹ The various summaries conflict with one another on certain significant plot points and diverge on the film's overall length. It is highly likely that the film was released in several different cuts. *Das Phantom der Oper* (1916), alternatively titled *Das Gespenst in Opernhaus*, is also a lost film, leaving behind no known footage or stills. The Austrian trade publication *Paimann's Film-Listen* published a one-paragraph summary in May 1916 and the film's Austrian distributor, Philipp & Pressburger published a lengthy synopsis the same year.⁹⁰

From the Silent Era onwards, adaptations of *Phantom* have had a particular penchant for heavily re-imaging and re-framing the narrative core of the original, changing its geographic and chronological setting, adding and subtracting characters and altering the nature and cause of Erik's disfigurement. Some of the key elements that appear consistently in film adaptations include: a music-related setting (ranging from opera to cabaret); a mysterious, emotionally unbalanced but brilliantly talented, potentially supernatural (usually physically abnormal) musician (the Phantom) who inhabits some form of underground space (cellar, dungeon, or crypt) that serves as a symbolic extension of his deranged mind; a young aspiring singer who falls under the Phantom's influence; a romantic triangle (or square) created by the presence of a more socially acceptable suitor (or suitors); and themes of physical versus internal distortion, the choice between romantic and professional fulfilment, the spiritual/revelatory power of music, and the possibility of redemption through pure,

⁸⁹ Henry Nicolella, "The Phantom Violin," *American Silent Horror, Science Fiction and Fantasy Feature Films, 1913-1929*, ed. John T Soister, Henry Nicolella and Steve Joyce (London: McFarland & Company, Inc. Publishers, 2012) 461–464.

⁹⁰ "Rev. of 'Das Phantom der Oper,'" *Paimann's Film-Listen*, 4 May 1916; "Das Phantom der Oper. Drama in 4 Akten. Verfasst von Ernst Matray. (Monopol Philipp & Pressburger)," *Kinematographische Rundschau* 14 May 1916: 13–4.

unselfish love. All of the above already exist in various forms in all three of the silent adaptations.

Arising from the needs and limitations of silent film, a number of key images were distilled from the novel, entering the cinematic *Phantom* canon. Filmmakers quickly established a core group of scenes that were less pivotal in the novel but had striking visual potential, including: the Phantom's first unmasking, the collapse of the Opera's chandelier, and the final confrontation between all of the main characters in the Phantom's underground lair. Each of these scenes became an important narrative turning point reinterpreted by each *Phantom* adaptation to match its thematic approach to the material.

The process of identifying scenes amenable to cinematic representation and refining them to develop the broader themes of a given adaptation is illustrated vividly by the example of Erik's death scene. Strictly speaking, it does not exist as a scene within the diegesis of the original work at all. A confrontation between the four central characters (Erik, Christine, Raoul and the Persian) culminating in Erik's voluntary release of Christine forms the climax of the novel, but Erik's death occurs later and is described retrospectively. In the considerably more concise structure of a feature-length cinematic narrative, these chronologically disparate events are condensed into a single scene that resolves all of the main plotlines simultaneously, often adding a violent and dramatic death sequence. The 1916 Matray/Chrisander version shows the Phantom perishing in an explosion that he accidentally sets off, *Phantom of the Violin*'s Ellis commits suicide together with his unfaithful wife, and Julian/Chaney (1925) culminates in an elaborately choreographed chase sequence after which Erik is slaughtered by an infuriated mob and cast into the Seine. It seems

however, that an earlier cut of the Julian/Chaney film diverged from the general trend. An alternative two-hour-long version previewed before the official release showed Erik freeing Christine of his own accord, then dying quietly in his hidden lair with no mob involved.⁹¹ The ending was re-shot and re-edited after the preview, possibly to accommodate Universal's insistence on foregrounding the Christine-Raoul romance.⁹² An ending that made Erik seem sympathetic and tragic rather than frightening and selfish would render Raoul and Christine's reunion bittersweet and the studio clearly wanted a happy ending. It is likely that similar considerations influenced much later adaptations as well.

Leroux's journalistic background strongly informs the narrative style of the original novel. The story is framed as an investigation by a nameless narrator, the events recounted through a multitude of eyewitnesses, newspaper articles, personal correspondence, and memoirs. Each account is highly subjective and unreliable and, as in *Dracula*, the monster himself is given no voice of his own. The avoidance to direct references to the Phantom's POV preserves the mystery of his identity and even the implicit possibility that he is an illusory presence or a figment of the other characters' imaginations. Although he is physically present in a number of pivotal scenes, they occur "off-screen" in the novel and are later revealed in dialogues between other characters. He appears as an active character himself only very late in the narrative.

The 1925 Julian/Chaney film tackles the challenge of finding the balance between concealing and revealing by hiding Erik's material form until exactly one-third into

⁹¹ Harry H. Long, "The Phantom of the Opera," *American Silent Horror, Science Fiction and Fantasy Feature Films* 455–61.

⁹² Jerrold E Hogle, *The Undergrounds of the Phantom of the Opera : Sublimation and the Gothic in Leroux's novel and its Progeny* (New York: Palgrave, 2002) 131-8.

the film when Christine first snatches away his mask. Occurring in full view and in the present (rather than in narrated flashback) the unmasking scene becomes a major narrative turning point for this and most subsequent *Phantom* adaptations. A 1916 synopsis released by the distributors of the lost Matray/Chrisander version shows that this earlier film had taken a different approach, recounting the story from Raoul's perspective. The Phantom is left nameless and the unmasking scene is conveyed through a conversation between Christine and Raoul (as in the novel), maintaining the Phantom's literal and symbolic anonymity.⁹³

In conveying details of Erik's past or developing the relationships between the main characters, film adaptations of *Phantom* often lean on sources other than the original novel, providing alternate angles on the action or shifting narrative emphasis. Leroux himself offers ample sources for narrative borrowing by conspicuously incorporating not only archetypal mythological/folkloric sources but also a menagerie of opera libretti. The operas that are diegetically performed or mentioned in the novel all contribute themes and characterisations at various points. Lyrics from actual arias are sometimes quoted in ways that intertwine them with dialogues or turn them into vocalisations of characters' thoughts and desires. Gounod's *Faust* plays a central metaphorical role in the story, but other operas like Verdi's *Otello* also make significant appearances.

The nature of the relationships between the central characters also fluctuates widely to accommodate a particular adaptation's narrative angle, the type of background provided for Erik and the level of access the audience is given to him as a character. For instance, the films that provide deeper insights into Erik's past and

⁹³ "Das Phantom der Oper" 13–4.

motivations (like Ford's *Violin*, Lubin/Rains or the much later Richardson/Dance miniseries) portray a sympathetic or even intimate relationship between Christine and Erik. The Julian/Chaney film, which suppresses Erik's physical appearance until the end of the film consistently keeps the character emotionally distanced from Christine. William K. Everson defines the spectrum of Erik's motives in Julian/Chaney as "revenge, paternal love, lust."⁹⁴ Other variations such as friendship and creative partnership, doubling and identification, and Oedipal/Electra complexes are added to this range by the other silent adaptations and later versions. The suggestion of a symbolic familial bond between Erik and Christine is strongly brought out by the novel but is mostly overlooked by silent adaptations, which also eschew any overt sexual implications. The Lubin/Rains version seems to be the first to consider incorporating a suggestion of incest, according to Jerrold Hogle. An earlier draft of the script made the Phantom Christine's biological father, who had abandoned her to pursue his own career and is now financially supporting her to allay his guilt. This subplot was later discarded to avoid "indelicate" suggestions.⁹⁵ Even with this change the filmmakers still seem wary of presenting the Phantom as a potential lover for the much-younger Christine, preferring to leave their relationship ambiguous.

II.4. Quasimodo

Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris* was first published in French in 1831. Two alternate English translations were published in 1833, one by William Hazlitt as

⁹⁴ William K. Everson, *Classics of the Horror Film* (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1990) 13.

⁹⁵ Hogle 153-72.

Notre Dame: A Tale of the Ancien Regime, and the other by Frederic Shoberl as *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.⁹⁶ It is the latter title that would most often be used for English-language film, theatre and television adaptations of the novel. The novel has since been translated into at least 42 languages as diverse as Spanish, Italian, Japanese, Czech, Scottish Gaelic, Vietnamese, Urdu and Afrikaans and has been adapted for the screen in close to a hundred feature films and television productions (both live action and animated).

Epic in its scope, Hugo's novel offers a cross section of late 15th century Paris from King Louis XI to the desperate vagabonds roaming the streets. It covers numerous interconnected storylines and features an enormous cast of characters representing different social classes, political views, moral perspectives and professions, all living out their lives in the shadow of the imposing Notre Dame Cathedral. The novel offers innumerable options and angles for potential adaptations to explore, but it is the figure of the hunchbacked bell ringer Quasimodo that has achieved the most iconic status in popular culture and forms the centre of most adaptations. A deaf and deformed foundling, Quasimodo has no position in society, observing the world from the height of his bell tower until he is induced to descend, with disastrous consequences. The characters that form his immediate circle include his mentor and father figure, now the Archdeacon of the cathedral, Claude Frollo; the beautiful teenage gypsy girl Esmeralda, whom both Quasimodo and Frollo are enthralled by; and her love interest, Captain of the King's Archers Phoebus de Chateaupers, who eventually betrays her to death and disgrace. Almost all of the above characters meet tragic ends.

⁹⁶ Victor Hugo, *Notre-Dame: a Tale of the "Ancien Régime,"* trans. William Carew Hazlitt (London: E. Wilson, 1833); Victor Hugo *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, trans. Frederic Shoberl (London: R. Bentley, 1833).

Out of the 10 Quasimodo-related silent films included in this research, only six officially claim to be adaptations of the novel, directly referencing the characters, names, and incidents described by Hugo. This is not to say there weren't many more, but these are the ones on which enough information is currently available. Universal Studios' 1923 *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (directed by Wallace Worsley and starring Lon Chaney) is perhaps the best-known and best-preserved of the silent versions, the only one currently available to view in full. Numerous stills, advertisements, plot summaries, and reviews are available for the other adaptations analysed in this research. Advertisements and reviews for *Notre Dame* adaptations in popular film magazines of the time, such as *Moving Picture World*, strongly emphasise their literary connection as a selling point. Listing Esmerelda-centred adaptation *The Darling of Paris* in its "Advertising Aids" section, *Moving Picture World* recommends highlighting "the fact that this is taken from Victor Hugo's celebrated story often done on the speaking stage."⁹⁷ Notably, *The Darling of Paris* chooses Esmeralda as its main protagonist, casting star Theda Bara in the role. In fact, the choice of Esmeralda as a focal point was not an unusual one, as more than one film and stage adaptation bore her name as its title. A strong romantic plotline was evidently seen as essential in such a dark narrative, and Quasimodo's grotesque deformity precluded his participation in it. Interestingly, Quasimodo's exclusion from the romantic element does not necessarily push him into a comedic or semi-villainous role. In fact, it is rather the opposite as he is generally elevated to the level of heroic, self-sacrificing martyr. It is Quasimodo and not the dashing Phoebus who dies in a desperate (usually unsuccessful) attempt to save the wrongfully accused

⁹⁷ "The Darling of Paris," *Moving Picture World* 8 Feb. 1919: 808.

Esmeralda. The fact that he is invariably fully aware that she can never be his, ultimately demonstrates that his love is purer and more selfless than that of the lascivious Phoebus.

Beyond the official adaptations discussed above, there is a range of films that heavily reference some of the situations and characters of Hugo's novel, transposing them into completely different contexts and environments and altering the names and backgrounds of the characters. It is unclear whether the more or less subtle tweaks introduced by these films were an attempt at evading copyright issues (such as those faced by F.W. Murnau's notorious *Nosferatu*) or simply a desire to add a new twist to an over-exploited but popular story. It is evident however that these films are all to some degree influenced by Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and the character of Quasimodo in particular. As such they are a valuable source of information on the ways in which Quasimodo was interpreted and represented in silent film.

The 1910 film *Hugo the Hunchback* for instance, makes no claims about a connection to Hugo's novel despite its distinctly unsubtle choice of name for its hunchbacked protagonist. There are also some connecting plot points such as the presence of an overbearing master/benefactor (a sculptor in this case), and a rakish noble who engages in an ill-fated romance with an innocent maiden whom he dishonours and discards. All of these points of resemblance are hardly coincidental, although the film takes a different direction from the novel. The hunchback, who is an apprentice sculptor rather than a bell-ringer, is successful in rescuing the unfortunate girl from death and disgrace, while the noble is punished for his treachery.

1909's *The Hunchback*, starring Frank Keenan, gives the eponymous hunchback himself a darker twist, portraying him as a violent alcoholic who ends up in the stocks due to his genuinely anti-social behaviour. His rescue and redemption through the medium of the virtuous Lady Gertrude (who is not a gypsy) bears a striking resemblance to Esmeralda's intervention in the fate of Quasimodo. With another twist on the Quasimodo theme, the hunchback dies tragically defending her from the dishonourable advances of a Phoebus-like reprobate. Whether connected to Quasimodo or not these films demonstrate a consistent preoccupation with the hunchback theme and the representation of hunchbacked characters.

Most *Notre Dame*-inspired films demonstrate a penchant for simultaneously de-romanticising and ennobling the hunchback while condemning the carnal lustfulness of his physically attractive competitor - a representational pattern that recurs in both direct and indirect adaptations. Whether the handsome young suitor turns faithless or not, the hunchback's twisted body demonstrably houses a pure and selfless spirit. It is interesting to note how frequently Quasimodo's extreme deformity is *not* taken to represent a bitter and twisted soul in film adaptations. His gradually revealed spiritual purity forms a stark contrast to the selfish lust that motivates most of the "normal" characters (including the innocent Esmeralda). The descendant of more than two decades of stage and screen Quasimodos, 1923's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Worsley/Chaney) capitalises on this point in the final scene as the heroic Quasimodo quietly hobbles off to die alone after saving Esmeralda and leaving her in the passionate embrace of her lover.

II.5. Roderick Usher

Edgar Allan Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher* is the only source included in these case studies that belongs to the American wave of 19th century Gothic literature. The setting is left ambiguous, but the themes of the narrative and its descriptions of landscapes, architecture, and its central monster figure, owe a notable debt to the European Gothic tradition. It was not one of the more frequently adapted literary works in the Silent Era, leaving behind only two known silent adaptations. Both versions were made in 1928, one in France, directed by Jean Epstein and the other in the United States, directed by James Sibley Watson and Melville Webber. Although this is a significantly smaller corpus of adaptations than some of the others discussed in this thesis, analysis of these two films offers valuable insights into cinematic and conceptual approaches to literary monster representations in silent film that can be applied on a wider scale. Both films are strikingly visual testaments to the technical, symbolic, and creative potential of the silent film medium, made at the height of its power and maturity – and on the verge of its imminent demise. They are also a valuable cross section of silent *Usher* adaptations, as they were made in such different environments and by filmmakers of such different backgrounds. Epstein was a professional director, deeply entrenched in the European film industry, while the Webber/Watson production was, according to Watson himself, “was strictly amateur.” All the crew (and some of the cast) functions were performed by the directors and their families and the film's main “properties” included cardboard sets

hand-painted by Melville Webber, a miniature staircase and a collection of prisms and lenses bought from a local optician to move around in front of the camera.⁹⁸

Apart from their choice of source material, the main connection between these two films is their interest in creating and presenting what could be called a monstrous environment. Most of the other factors - their reasons for choosing Poe's story, interpretations of the material, methods for translating it into visual terms, and even their backgrounds and experience levels are notably divergent. Both films demonstrate minimal use of intertitles, a great emphasis on cinematic rather than literary language, and the use of cinema-specific techniques to build visual rhythms. Although they employ different methods and aesthetics, Epstein and Webber and Watson use Poe's famous story - atmospheric, psychologically ambiguous, sensorily textured, at once intimate and uncanny - to create a fragile, insular world of pure visualisation. In the words of film historian William K. Everson "the lack of sound automatically created that world of unreality and imagination that was so essential to Poe."⁹⁹ Although made in very different styles, both films are vivid illustrations of the use an architectural or natural environment to create a seemingly inanimate double for a human monster figure.¹⁰⁰

Despite the highly experimental and almost abstract nature of the editing and cinematography used in the Watson/Webber version and a number of dramatic changes introduced in the Epstein film, both choose to preserve the same basic plot points and images from Poe's text as their structural framework. Both open with the arrival of an outside (nameless) visitor to the doomed House of Usher, illustrate a

⁹⁸ James Sibley Watson, "The Films of J. S. Watson, Jr., and Melville Webber: Some Retrospective Views (I)," *University of Rochester Library Bulletin* Winter 1975.

⁹⁹ Everson, *Classics* 218.

¹⁰⁰ This topic is discussed and analysed in detail in Chapter VI - "The Architectural Monster."

strong and even intimate relationship between the last surviving Ushers, twin brother and sister Roderick and Madeline, and depict Madeline's sudden and unexplained death and her subsequent premature burial.

The final scenes of the two films also draw heavily upon Poe's evocative, sinister culmination - as the visitor reads aloud to distract Roderick from the storm gathering outside, his words are echoed by the horrifying sounds of Madeline breaking out of her coffin. As she bursts into the room, the storm assumes a spectacular pitch, and the mouldering House is brought crashing down in both physical and symbolic terms, engulfed by the dark waters of the adjoining lake. This last sequence provides extremely fertile ground for experimental cinematography and special effects and is as much a trademark for *Usher* adaptations as the transformation sequence is for *Jekyll and Hyde* films. Epstein overhauls the meaning of the scene, showing both Roderick and Madeline escaping the ruins and ultimately splitting the House of Usher's seemingly inextricable human and architectural counterparts.

Neither film goes as far as Roger Corman's much later 1960 version with Vincent Price, which casts the visitor as Madeline's fiancée and Roderick as a possessive, jealous brother and ends with Madeline strangling him with her bare hands. The choices made in the 1960 version clearly show that its focus lay primarily in exploiting the shock value of the macabre and gruesome qualities of the story. For Epstein and Watson and Webber, part of the fascination of the material lay in its use as a vehicle for statements on the nature of film and perhaps "the relationship between pro-filmic and post-filmic reality". Introducing an anthology of writings on Epstein's work, Sarah Keller shows how Epstein uses Roderick to convey his own belief that "what is filmed is *greater* than life; the realm of the photographic exposes

something more fascinating about the thing (or person) photographed than that thing (or person) holds on its own.”¹⁰¹

The main narrative alteration in both cases is a shift in focus from the narrator figure to that of the House and the heightened emphasis on the House as Roderick’s main doppelgänger. The House is one of the central characters, on a par with its human counterparts - an element of Poe’s story that has proven to be especially amenable to cinematic interpretation in the Silent Era and beyond. The powerful and mysterious interconnection between the two Ushers, the House itself and the visitor/narrator is a recurring theme in the films, although the nature of the individual connections varies.

Despite preserving all of the source text’s core characters and plot points, both films find ways to reframe the narrative and its symbolic connotations through subtle alterations in the characters’ relationships. The Watson/Webber film leaves the connections between the three human characters ambiguous. Although in a later interview, Herbert Stern (Roderick) refers to Madeline (Hildegard Watson) as “Roderick’s sister,” the film never explicitly states this and a viewer with no previous knowledge of the source text can easily assume that she is his wife.¹⁰² The visitor does not interact directly with either of the Ushers, and the strikingly surreal nature of his makeup and presentation leave his very materiality in doubt.

Epstein’s film defines these links far more specifically, remoulding them into new forms. Drawing elements from Poe’s short story *The Oval Portrait*, Epstein turns the Ushers into spouses rather than siblings and transforms their relationship from an

¹⁰¹ Sarah Keller, “Introduction,” *Jean Epstein: Critical Essays and New Translations*, ed. Sarah Keller et al. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012), 23–50. 40–1

¹⁰² Herbert Stern, “The Films of J. S. Watson, Jr., and Melville Webber: Some Retrospective Views (II),” *University of Rochester Library Bulletin* Winter 1975.

incestuous to a parasitic/abusive one. Roderick's association with his visitor is altered through the creation of a generational gap. Poe does not specifically reference Roderick's age, although it is made clear in the text that he and the narrator belong to the same generation. Their bond stems from a shared childhood and a reluctant sense of identification on the part of the narrator. Progressively, he becomes one of Roderick's opposing but interconnected doubles, a seemingly more rational counterpart who filters the entire experience through a less partial lens. While this issue remains largely irrelevant in the Watson/Webber film, Epstein transforms the dynamic of this relationship entirely by pairing his Roderick, the 34-year-old Jean Debucourt, with a 71-year-old visitor (Charles Lamy). More than twice as old as Roderick, the visitor assumes the role of a father figure rather than a foil, taking an assertive and protective role towards his friend rather than a directly empathetic one.

Attempting to identify the subtext of this change, Christophe Wall-Romana ascribes a homosexual tilt to Epstein's vision, describing the way the film "circumvents heterosexual desire with a morbid narcissism involving fetishized female likeness" by staging "older males competitively hovering over Roderick" while he obsessively paints his dying wife.¹⁰³ In direct contrast, Darragh O'Donoghue sees the widened age gap between Roderick and his visitor as a device that "not only removes all trace of 'transgressive' or taboo sexuality, but also undoes the complex patterning that links the supposedly rational narrator to mad Roderick, both to the House (with its associations of mental and physical decay) and in a triangular relation to the sister."¹⁰⁴ Either way, the visitor's apparent position of

¹⁰³ Christophe Wall-Romana, "Epstein's Photogénie as Corporeal Vision: Inner Sensation, Queer Embodiment, and Ethics," *Jean Epstein* 51–72. 59

¹⁰⁴ Darragh O'Donoghue, "On Some Motifs in Poe: Jean Epstein's *La Chute de la maison Usher*," *Senses of Cinema* Feb. 2004.

authority is gradually undermined by the emphasis placed on his sensory deficiencies, leaving the viewer alone with Roderick and his hallucinations, unfiltered through an external, rational perspective. The central relationship remains that between Roderick and his House.

Some of the digressions from the source text that appear in the two *Usher* adaptations relate to the unique challenges posed by this particular material, while some are common to many silent Gothic adaptations in general. A good example of the latter is a shift in narrative perspective. Poe's *Fall of the House of Usher* is told entirely in first person by a nameless narrator, a close childhood friend of Roderick's, summoned by a hysterical letter from his ailing friend. There is enough of a personal connection to explain his involvement, but he is sufficiently detached from the events he describes to be seen as objective (at least initially). In both the Epstein and the Webber/Watson films, the narrator would be more accurately defined as "the visitor" as neither film looks to him to mediate the narrative. The use of distorted, hallucinatory imagery, specific point of view shots, and in Epstein's case, the illustration of sounds and visions that clearly only Roderick can experience, all lead to the conclusion that we are seeing through his eyes, and not those of the visitor. The enhanced autonomy of the house as character, its reinforced connection with Roderick, and its visual presentation to the viewer also serve to construct a point of view that is clearly distinct from the visitor's subjective perceptions.

II.6. Gwynplaine

While Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris* and the character of the deformed, hunchbacked bell-ringer Quasimodo is widely known from countless cinematic and theatrical adaptations, it is often forgotten that this was not Hugo's only novel with a disfigured character at its centre. In 1869, almost 40 years after writing *Notre Dame*, Hugo published *L'homme qui rit* (*The Man Who Laughs*, also published under the title *By Order of the King*). Now considered one of Hugo's more obscure works, *The Man Who Laughs* was translated into English mere months after its French publication and serialised in *Appleton's Journal of Literature, Science, and Art*. The opening chapters were published on Saturday, March 27, 1869.¹⁰⁵ It was re-printed in novel form in English as Volume IV of *The Valjean Edition of the Novels of Victor Hugo*, printed in the 1880s by P.F. Collier & Son Company, New York. The translator was not credited. Afterwards it was published multiple times in various English-language editions. Many of Hugo's novels, such as *Notre Dame de Paris* and *Les Misérables* were translated shortly after their publication into English, a range of other European languages, and even Japanese. Already widely accessible and internationally read in the late 1800s, they could inspire stage and screen adaptations almost anywhere.

Unlike *Notre Dame de Paris*, *The Man Who Laughs* is not set in France and does not centre around a famous Parisian landmark. Hugo decided to situate the novel's lengthy, multi-layered and complex narrative in late-17th and early-18th century England instead. The story revolves around Gwynplaine, a young man whose face is carved into a permanent grin in infancy to punish his nobleman father for rebelling

¹⁰⁵ Victor Hugo, "The Man Who Laughs or, By the King's Command," *Appleton's Journal of Literature, Science, and Art* 27 March 1869: 33–41.

against King James II. Left nameless, homeless and faceless, Gwynplaine makes his home with Ursus, an eccentric wandering philosopher, Dea, a blind infant he finds in the snow, and Homo, their loyal wolf. The complete opposite of *Notre Dame*'s embittered and reclusive Quasimodo, Gwynplaine grows to become a popular fairground and carnival performer and forms a mutual romantic bond with Dea. When his true identity is unexpectedly revealed, he is faced with the choice between claiming his birthright or rejecting the society that has betrayed him and retreating to a peaceful but impoverished life with his surrogate family. As Gwynplaine searches for his own voice and future in the midst of dangerous political intrigues, Hugo uses him as a vehicle for discussing issues of duality, political and personal hypocrisy, social discrimination, vengeance, identity, greed, ambition, and the line between spiritual love and carnal lust.

Although Hugo's other works, such as *Les Misérables*, *Notre Dame de Paris* and the now little-known *Les Travailleurs de la Mer* were all adapted multiple times internationally before 1930, this was not the case for *The Man Who Laughs* until the 1920s. The novel does appear to have been familiar to audiences at the time, as indicated by a *New York Times* review for a 1921 stage adaptation, which refers to it "Victor Hugo's celebrated novel" and deplores the fact that Hugo is not given sufficient credit in the program.¹⁰⁶ The play in question, *Clair de Lune* by Blanche Oelrichs (under her male pseudonym Michael Strange), may in fact be the earliest adaptation of *The Man Who Laughs*. Film adaptations made afterwards generally name Hugo's original novel rather than *Clair de Lune* as their source. However, as the first attempt at reworking Hugo's ponderous narrative into a performance context

¹⁰⁶ Alexander Woolcott, "Review: Clair de Lune," *New York Times* 19 Apr. 1921: sec. The Play.

the play initiates certain patterns that are traceable in later film versions. The play debuted on Broadway on April 18, 1921 and ran for 64 performances, despite unfavourable reviews. Harshly criticised for its stilted dialogue, overblown language and confusing plot structure, the production endured due to the efforts of Strange's husband - famed stage and screen actor John Barrymore - who took on the role of "Gwymplaine."¹⁰⁷ In his study of Barrymore's performance techniques, Michael A. Morrison suggests that "Gwymplane, a facially deformed mountebank, noble and pure in spirit, romantic yet grotesque" was "a role that held much the same appeal as Mr. Hyde and Richard III." He also points out that Barrymore was enthusiastic about the production in general and "designed many of the costumes and much of the scenery, and plunged into rehearsals with his customary energy."¹⁰⁸ However, neither Barrymore's popularity nor the story's entertainingly Gothic potential could conceal Strange's awkward handling of Hugo's complicated and heavy narrative. Strange's lapses in judgment in transferring *The Man Who Laughs* to the stage were a valuable demonstration, showing which of Hugo's characters and plot points worked well in a visual/performance context and which didn't. Barrymore's makeup design was the first attempt at visually representing Gwynplaine's deformity while searching for a balance between the character's romantic potential and his grotesque features.¹⁰⁹

Aside from the theatrical version, historians vary on the exact number of Silent Era adaptations of *The Man Who Laughs*. The 1928 Universal film starring Conrad

¹⁰⁷ For more on the critical response to Michael Strange's *Clair de lune*, see Edward T. James, Janet Wilson James and Paul S. Boyer, eds. *Notable American Women, 1607-1950: A Biographical Dictionary* (Harvard UP, 1971) 490.

¹⁰⁸ Michael A. Morrison, *John Barrymore, Shakespearean Actor* (Cambridge UP, 1999) 124.

¹⁰⁹ This topic will be discussed further in Chapter V - Types of Monstrous Deformity in Silent Film, Their Mechanics and Symbolism

Veidt and directed by Paul Leni is the best-preserved and most well-known, frequently included in listings of American silent films or early horror cinema. This was not the earliest adaptation, however. An Austrian film released in 1921, titled *Das Grinsende Gesicht* (*The Grinning Face*) openly used the character names and plot of Hugo's novel, despite its altered title. Delphine Gleizes's 2005 listing of Hugo adaptations on film, *L'œuvre de Victor Hugo à l'écran: des rayons et des ombres*, lists the 1921 and 1928 films as the earliest adaptations of *The Man Who Laughs*.¹¹⁰ *The Horror Film*, a 2004 collection of essays on the history of horror cinema edited by Stephen Prince, also mentions the 1921 and 1928 films and briefly adds that "*The Man Who Laughs* had previously been filmed in 1909 as *L'Homme Qui Rit*."¹¹¹ No other details, such as the names of the director and cast or the country of production, are provided. A 2012 article by Harry H. Long in *American Silent Horror, Science Fiction and Fantasy Feature Films, 1913-1929* provides further information and a different date for this mysterious early film. The 1928 version forms the core of the article, but Long notes that "Hugo's novel had previously been adapted to the screen in 1908 by Pathé as *L'Homme qui rit* and in 1921 as *Das grinsende Gesicht* (*The Smirking Face*) by Olympic Films; while no copies are known to survive of the former, two prints of the latter title apparently have weathered the decades in an Austrian archive."¹¹² In contrast to *Dracula* and *The Phantom of the Opera*, the number of adaptations of *The Man Who Laughs* does not increase dramatically in the sound era. A cursory search reveals only three sound versions - a 1966 Italian film called *L'uomo che ride* that moves the action to

¹¹⁰ Delphine Gleizes, ed. *L'œuvre de Victor Hugo à l'écran: des rayons et des ombres* (Presses Université Laval, 2005).

¹¹¹ Stephen Prince, ed. *The Horror Film* (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2004) 55.

¹¹² Harry H. Long, "The Man Who Laughs," *American Silent Horror, Science Fiction and Fantasy Feature Films, 1913-1929*, 374-378.

Renaissance Italy and involves Gwynplaine into a conflict with the Borgias; a French television film released in three episodes in 1971; and a 2012 French feature film.

Attempts to unearth any materials relating to the presumably French 1908/1909 film have so far proven unsuccessful. This thesis will focus on an analysis of available materials from *Das Grinsende Gesicht* (Olympic Films, 1921), directed by Julius Herzka, with Franz Höbling as Gwynplaine; and *The Man Who Laughs* (Universal Pictures, 1928), directed by Paul Leni, with Conrad Veidt as Gwynplaine. According to personal correspondence with the Filmarchiv Austria, a 35mm print of *Das Grinsende Gesicht* does exist and has been restored. It was screened at the VIENNALE Filmfestival in 2008. The festival's catalogue provides a brief synopsis and cast and crew lists. The Filmarchiv also holds "a program folder from 1921, two film-stills and a frame picture."¹¹³ The Deutsche Kinemathek in Berlin holds 16 high-quality, large-format prints of stills from the film, showing most of the major characters, various indoor and outdoor sets, and elaborate hair and costumes, as well as a clear look at Gwynplaine's makeup. Universal's *The Man Who Laughs* is preserved as a complete print with a synchronised soundtrack (music and limited sound effects), restored and released on DVD. Multiple stills, publicity materials, reviews and production information are also available.

The novel's entwined storylines involve an overwhelming number of major and minor characters, who either play an active role in moving the story forward or are referenced in lengthy re-tellings of past events. Without mentioning minor characters, or those who die before the narrative opens, the major, active characters include: Gwynplaine and his surrogate family, Dea, Ursus and Homo; the seductive

¹¹³ Personal email from Armin Loacker, Filmarchiv Austria, "Question About a Film in the Archive," 16 Mar. 2015, online, Internet, 16 Mar. 2015.

Duchess Josiana, who develops a perverse lust for Gwynplaine and who happens to be an illegitimate daughter of King James II; Josiana's fiancée, David Dirry-Moir, an illegitimate son of Gwynplaine's father who will be disinherited if Gwynplaine's true identity is confirmed; court schemer Barkilphedro, who facilitates some of the novel's dramatic revelations to further his own agenda; and the gullible Queen Anne, who causes conflict and tragedy while trying to settle personal scores and atone for some of her father's wrongdoings. At first glance, this list appears heavy for the plot of a single film to bear, but the powerful narrative bonds between the characters make it difficult to remove one or two and still preserve some semblance of logic. *Clair de lune* set the precedent for future adaptations by preserving all of the above, despite arbitrary changes in some of the names. The Herzka/Höbling and Leni/Veidt films follow the same pattern, the latter even including some characters who are only mentioned in the novel in retrospect. King James II and Lord Linnaeus Clancharlie (Gwynplaine's father) appear in the film's violent opening scenes although neither makes a physical appearance as an active character in the novel.

The brief English-language summary provided on the website of the VIENNALE Vienna International Film Festival describes the Herzka/Höbling film as "A series of historical vignettes, based on the novel *L'homme qui rit* by Victor Hugo." The significantly longer German-language version of the synopsis outlines a plot that appears to adhere closely to the novel. In fact, it specifies that: "*Das grinsende Gesicht* ist, durchaus zeit- und genretypisch, eigentlich noch ganz Attraktionskino, eine bilderbogenhafte Reihe von Illustrationen zum Text, opulent ausgestattet und atmosphärisch dicht."¹¹⁴ It appears from this comment that the film

¹¹⁴ "GRINSENDE GESICHT | Viennale," n.d., online, Internet, 12 Mar. 2015. , Available: <http://www.viennale.at/en/films/grinsende-gesicht>.

is more a series of opulent, moving illustrations to the novel than an independent artistic statement. Maintaining a general level of faithfulness to the basics of Hugo's story, the film preserves his tragic ending as well, finishing with Gwynplaine's failure to uphold the cause of social justice and his and Dea's subsequent deaths.

The lavish Leni/Veidt film, on the other hand, was a Universal production and could not afford to have a disheartening end. Most of Hugo's plot was reworked and re-conceptualised to accommodate a more upbeat tone and an unequivocally cheerful conclusion. The film all but discards Hugo's weighty social commentary and philosophical musings, choosing visually striking and dramatic moments from the novel to build its narrative framework. The impact of Gwynplaine's disfigurement is also softened and little reference is made to the unnatural surgical procedures he must have undergone as a very young child. The opening sequences contain the film's darkest and most disturbing images - the execution of Gwynplaine's father and Gwynplaine's own abandonment in childhood. As soon as the starving, half-frozen boy finds his way through a snowstorm to Ursus's wagon, the tone of the film begins to lighten considerably. Both Gwynplaine and Dea are shown as innocent, wholesome, and virtuous, and Gwynplaine is able to firmly maintain his moral integrity despite the temptations of lust and power. A number of stunt sequences is added to showcase Gwynplaine's acrobatic skills including an elaborate rooftop chase and a sword fight. Tying up loose ends and removing all remaining possibility of threat, Homo (who is very obviously a dog instead of a wolf) savages and drowns the treacherous Barkilphedro. Hugo's dark, socially-conscious tragedy is smoothly transformed into a light-hearted romantic action film with comedic elements.

The multiple interconnected plotlines of Hugo's novel rely on the use of third-person omniscient narration, occasionally switching to third-person limited to build suspense or focus on a particular character's perspective. Gwynplaine's point of view is only presented to a limited degree. In fact, a large percentage of the action surrounding Gwynplaine's family unit is filtered through Ursus and tinged by his philosophical, historical and social digressions. The Leni/Veidt version includes Ursus as a character but omits most of his narrative and expository functions. The development of the narrative rests mainly but not exclusively on Gwynplaine's perspective, switching to other characters when needed. Compared to *Jekyll and Hyde* adaptations, the perspective shift here is minor. However, increased emphasis on the young, impulsive Gwynplaine rather than the cynical, worldly Ursus lends greater energy and emotional immediacy to the narrative. The use of Ursus in a semi-narrator role allowed Hugo to present the action from a more distanced and analytic perspective and use Ursus's voice to openly expound his own social and political views without tying them coherently into the narrative. These elements are almost entirely absent from silent adaptations.

II.7. Orlac

Les Mains d'Orlac by Maurice Renard is one of the latest works included in this corpus, the only one actually written at the height of the Silent Era and adapted for the screen just four years after its release. The novel was first published in 58 episodes in the French journal *L'Intransigeant* from May 15 - July 12, 1920. The earliest English translation was made by Florence Crewe-Jones and published in

New York in 1929.¹¹⁵ Renard's story about Stephen Orlac, a famous concert pianist badly injured in a railway accident combines elements of a mystery/thriller, a Gothic-tinged tale of the supernatural, and a science fiction story. A series of complex and dangerous surgeries saves Orlac's life, but as he recovers he grows convinced that his damaged hands are no longer his own. Led to believe that they were transplanted from the corpse of an executed murderer, Orlac begins to fear that they are taking over his mind and body and forcing him to commit murders in a somnambulistic state. The seemingly supernatural occurrences that plague the unfortunate Orlac are all exposed at the end as an elaborate hoax and Orlac's hands, though genuinely transplanted, are not guilty of criminal activity. This conclusion leaves open the question of Orlac's mental state after the accident - his somnambulistic episodes, panic attacks and paranoid delusions are not all artificially induced. Renard's novel touches on issues very relevant to post-WWI audiences, including post-traumatic stress disorder, the psychological effects of severe physical trauma and disability, and the reconstruction of emotional and physical identity after participating in a major crisis/catastrophe. In its exploration of these modern themes the novel expands them into broader concepts such as duality and split personality, biological predisposition, and the influence of superstitious beliefs.

Renard's works have been noted for their generically hybrid nature and diverse themes. Arthur B. Evans laments that Renard has largely been neglected by Anglo-American science fiction scholars mainly because of the difficulties in defining his writing - "Renard's fiction seems continually to cross the line into Gothic horror,

¹¹⁵ Maurice Renard, *The Hands of Orlac*, trans. Florence Crewe-Jones (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1929).

mythological fantasy, detective fiction, and the fantastic in general.”¹¹⁶ Renard himself openly acknowledged influences as diverse as Edgar Allan Poe and H. G. Wells. This generic indeterminacy gave rise to unusual combinations of tone, subject and atmosphere that would resonate in later cinematic adaptations of his writings. Renard shared Wells’s fascination with biological engineering and followed the scientific advances of his time, especially in biology and medicine. Contributing to the evolution of the emerging science fiction genre, he also studied its development and attempted to analyse its features and functions in modern culture. In an article discussing what he called “le roman merveilleux-scientifique” (the ‘Scientific-Marvelous Novel’), he underlines its importance as “the inevitable product of an era where science dominates but does not extinguish our eternal need for fantasy, it is indeed a new genre which has just come into its own.” According to Renard’s definition,

The scientific-marvelous novel is a kind of fiction which has at its base a sophism, the object of which is to transport the reader to a new and more accurate understanding of the universe, and the methodology of which is the application of scientific method to the comprehensive study of the unknown and the uncertain.¹¹⁷

Although Renard himself experimented with a staggering variety of genres and styles, his stories of the “scientific-marvelous” attempted to adhere to the above principles, especially the idea of grounding a single fantastic element in a rational, scientific framework. The surgery described in *The Hands of Orlac* was impossible at the time, but the character of pioneering surgeon Dr. Cerral was based on Dr. Alexis Carrel, a medical innovator who received the Nobel Prize for his experiments with transplant surgery and the grafting of body parts. Many of Renard’s stories and

¹¹⁶ Evans 380-96.

¹¹⁷ Maurice Renard, “Du Roman merveilleux-scientifique et de son action sur l’intelligence du progress,” *Le Spectateur* October 1909.

novels deal with the question of transplantation and biological enhancement and its possible effects on psychology and altered modes of perception. For instance, in his 1921 novel *L'Homme truqué* (*The Altered Man*), a French soldier blinded in WWI is given experimental “electroscopic” eyes that not only restore his vision but allow him to witness invisible and non-visual phenomena.¹¹⁸ *Orlac* does not overtly mention the War and its victims, but it reflects the same preoccupation with fragmented minds and bodies.

There are no records of adaptations of *The Hands of Orlac* previously to 1924. The only silent film known to be a direct adaptation of Renard’s novel is *Orlacs Hände* (1924), directed by Robert Wiene and starring Conrad Veidt as Orlac. It was followed by several more or less direct sound adaptations including *Mad Love* (1935) and *The Hands of Orlac* (1960) as well as multiple films inspired by the concept of prosthetic or transplanted limbs taking over their owner’s subconscious. *Orlacs Hände* (1924) exists in the form of full and partial prints in various film archives internationally, notably the Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv in Berlin, Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung, the Filmarchiv Austria and the Deutsches Filminstitut. It has been restored and released with several different scores, screened at festivals and released on DVD. It is widely available to view. A multitude of publicity stills, production photographs, reviews and publicity materials are also preserved in archives.

The novel is written mostly in third-person limited point of view, with a subtle switch to first person in the second half. Referencing his own journalistic background, Renard chooses a similar framing device to that used by Gaston Leroux in *The Phantom of the Opera*. The Preamble introduces the reader to journalist

¹¹⁸ Renard, *L'Homme*.

Gaston Breteuil (who stands in for the voice of Renard himself). Breteuil presents the succeeding narrative as an extraordinary but true story, retold with altered names to protect the identities of the participants. He claims that he witnessed the story's dramatic conclusion at first hand, and was able to reconstruct the rest based on the account of Madame Orlac. The part of the narrative based on Madame Orlac's testimony is written in third person, but it is limited by her own knowledge of the events described and tinted by her thoughts and emotions in the process. As a result, neither narrative voice allows the reader to gain access to Orlac himself, and his deteriorating psychological state is only conveyed through the eyes of other characters. The experience of losing control of one's sanity and identity - of becoming monstrous - is revealed only through external appearances and the interpretations of external observers. Neither the compassionate, anxious gaze of Madame Orlac, nor the dispassionate scrutiny of Gaston Breteuil can come close to uncovering the full *interior* intricacies of Orlac's deranged psyche.

Repeating the pattern of many preceding monster-centred literary adaptations, *Orlacs Hände* resets the point of view to the monster and eliminates narrators who are extraneous to the main plotline. Gaston Breteuil is not included as a character and Madame Orlac, while still present as an important character, does not mediate the narrative in the same way as in the novel. After the opening scenes (in which Orlac is unconscious) the events of the film are presented mainly through his POV with occasional digressions to the POV of his wife. Otherwise, the film hinges on Orlac himself, revealing his inner thoughts, feelings and illusions. The viewer is frequently left one-on-one with Orlac, sharing his doubts about the reality of the events unfolding around him. As in Wiene's earlier film, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*,

Orlac's narrative structure plunges the viewer into the mind of a disturbed and unreliable protagonist.

Most of the changes made in the transfer from page to screen stem from the film's narrowed focus on Orlac's mental state. A host of characters who play an important part in the novel's criminal and occult subplots are excised, along with the events they had participated in. Only characters who have a direct bearing on Orlac's hands are preserved, including the surgeon Dr. Cerral and the villainous Eusebio Nera who attempts to blackmail Orlac by deceiving him about the origin of his hands. A noticeable but narratively inexplicable change is the decision to replace the first names of the Orlac couple - the novel's Stephen Orlac is renamed Paul and his wife Rosine becomes Yvonne. As no other attempt was made to disguise the film's source material, it is unlikely that this alteration was prompted by legal concerns.

Narratively, the film makes a couple of particularly strong shifts in focus that reframe some of the novel's plotlines and themes, particularly in its depiction of Orlac's physical condition and the role of the supernatural in his misadventures. In terms of physicality, the novel initially emphasises Orlac's hands *least* of all. Meticulous medical details are provided to describe his numerous injuries, particularly his potentially life-threatening skull fracture. It is this problem that Rosine agonises over, plagued by nightmares as Orlac's surgery progresses. As Stephen begins to recover, Rosine is struck by his odd demeanour and grows more concerned about the state of his brain rather than his hands –

The hands? That was a detail! But the brain? Everything hinged upon that... it was hard to believe that Stephen's oddness was not the result of something odd about the operation! There was about him a quality that was new;

something unforeseen, a surprising quality, an almost monstrous element...that the state of his hands in no way justified.¹¹⁹

She already perceives Stephen as monstrous, yet the hybridity she fears lies in his head rather than his hands - she searches for the cause in his mind. The film sheds the novel's meticulous descriptions of Orlac's injuries and their side effects channelling all of the trauma into his hands alone. His skull fractures are barely acknowledged in the film and his lame leg is eliminated altogether. He leaves the hospital seemingly fully recovered and even his hands show no visible signs of damage. The strangeness that Rosine/Yvonne perceives in her recovering husband is relocated from his fractured skull to his unfamiliar hands. The cinematic Orlac withholds touch and gesture from his wife in the same way that the literary one withheld confidence and warmth. He cringes at her expressions of affection and refuses to sully her purity by touching her.

Occultism and the supernatural occupy a notable place in the novel, governing the actions of certain characters, defining their personalities, or affecting their moods and desires. Visions, seances, mediums and suggestions of necromancy proliferate throughout the narrative and form a large part of the mysterious criminal activities surrounding the Orlac family. The film eliminates all of the novel's supernatural intimations, including the occult practices of Orlac's father, the entire character of his spiritist friend, Monsieur de Crochans and the odd "visions" experienced by Rosine and Stephen. The film's structure is as minimalist as its art direction, replacing the novel's elaborately interconnected chain of criminal acts with a narrow focus on Orlac's disintegrating psyche. Nightmares do figure in the fabric of the film but only to express Orlac's thoughts and fears with the use of visual metaphors.

¹¹⁹ Maurice Renard, *The Hands of Orlac*, trans. Iain White (London: Souvenir, 1980) 69.

II.8. Frankenstein's Creature

Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley was first published anonymously in 1818 and re-published under Shelley's name in 1823. An early science fiction tale with strong Gothic overtones, the novel relates the tragic journey of young scientist Victor Frankenstein as he attempts to artificially generate life. Managing to successfully animate a creature pieced together out of the bodies of dead criminals, Frankenstein is horrified by the result and abandons his creation. The Creature (which remains nameless throughout the novel) pursues his creator across the world, learning a great deal about himself and society in the process. Disillusioned and embittered, the Creature's yearning for acceptance turns into a quest for vengeance as he destroys everyone Frankenstein held dear and leads the scientist into the icy wastes of the Arctic, where both meet their fates. Through the complex and violent relationship between Frankenstein and his Creature, Shelley discusses duality, identity and Otherness, parenthood and maturation, the dangers of ambition, and the conflict between religious teachings and scientific progress.

Similarly to Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and Stoker's *Dracula*, *Frankenstein* was adapted for the stage very soon after its publication. In 1823, only five years after the novel's publication, it was adapted by Richard Brinsley Peake into a successful play called *Presumption; or, The Fate of Frankenstein*. Within the next several years, this production was followed by no less than fourteen other plays in English and French with titles such as *The Monster and the Magician* and *The Man and the Monster*. *The Last Laugh*, a 1915 play by American playwrights Charles W. Goddard and Paul Dickey is a *Frankenstein* parody and may be the earliest 20th century stage adaptation. Peggy Webling's 1927

dramatisation *Frankenstein: An Adventure in the Macabre* starred actor-manager Hamilton Deane, who was already working on a stage version of *Dracula* at the time. Deane performed in both productions. Although early reviews berated the play itself they praised Deane for his sympathetic portrayal of the Creature. The play was later revised by John L. Balderston, who also tweaked *Dracula* (the play) for its Broadway transfer. Universal's 1931 film adaptations of *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* were both based primarily on the Deane productions rather than on the original novels.¹²⁰

Although the earlier plays have less direct connections to specific cinematic adaptations, their narrative deviations and abridgements as well as their visual and performative interpretations of the Creature laid down patterns that would be later followed in early cinema. Martin Tropp evaluates this process as detrimental to the messages of the original source, accusing early dramatisations of trivialising "the intricacies of the novel" and turning its story into a vehicle for the possibilities of the nineteenth-century stage, which thrived on spectacle and melodrama."¹²¹ These considerations - a need to simplify Shelley's narrative for performance and an interest in emphasising moments/scenes that could exploit the possibilities of a different medium - were no less relevant in cinema than on the stage.

Considering the abundance of theatrical adaptations of *Frankenstein* produced in the nineteenth and early 20th centuries, it is surprising that the novel played a relatively small role in Silent Era cinema. My extensive research through the

¹²⁰ For more details on early stage adaptations of *Frankenstein*, see Amnon Kabatchnik, *Blood on the Stage, 1950-1975: Milestone Plays of Crime, Mystery, and Detection* (Scarecrow Press, 2011) 296-297.

¹²¹ Martin Tropp, "Re-creating the Monster: *Frankenstein* and Film," *Nineteenth-century Women at the Movies: Adapting Classic Women's Fiction to Film*, ed. Barbara Tapa Lupack (Popular Press, 1999) 23-77. 24-25

archives of the American Film Institute, the British Film Institute, Silent Era periodicals and trade magazines, the Progressive Silent Film List, the Internet Movie Database, and other miscellaneous resources on silent films, horror films and lost films, have consistently yielded information on only three Silent Era adaptations: two made in the United States and one in Italy. The existence of other versions should not be ruled out, but as these are the only versions on which information is currently available the discussion will focus on them. The AFI catalogue also lists an 1899 film by the American Mutoscope and Biograph Company called *The Frankenstein Trestle*, yet despite the use of the name, the film appears to have nothing to do with Shelley's novel. According to information taken from Biograph records, the film was under ten minutes long and documented the passage of a train across a mountain gorge.¹²² The earliest known adaptation of *Frankenstein* is a 1910 short of the same name produced by Edison Studios, directed by J. Searle Dawley and featuring Charles Stanton Ogle as the Creature. *Life Without Soul*, a 1915 feature-length Ocean Film Corporation production, was not a direct adaptation but was heavily influenced by *Frankenstein*. It was directed by Joseph W. Smiley with Percy Darrell Standing as the Creature. The title and almost all of the character names are altered, but Shelley's novel is explicitly referenced in the film and much of the plot is built around very similar themes and storylines. An Italian adaptation called *Il Mostro Di Frankenstein* was released in 1920, directed by Eugenio Testa and starring Umberto Guarracino.

¹²² "The Frankenstein Trestle," *AFI Catalog of Feature Films*, 28 Mar. 2015
 <<http://www.afi.com/members/catalog/DetailView.aspx?s=&Movie=31225>>.



Figure 20: Poster for *Life Without Soul* (Ocean Film Corporation 1915), directed by Joseph W. Smiley. Lost film.

The 1910 Edison film was considered lost for decades until a print was discovered in a private collection in the 1970s. *Edison's Frankenstein* by Fredrick C. Wiebel reprints various materials from the film including stills, pages from the scenario, publicity materials and extensive details about the production, cast, crew, sets, and the film's re-discovery and restoration.¹²³ The film itself has been digitised and restored. It is available to view online and on DVD. *Life Without Soul* and *Il Mostro Di Frankenstein* are both lost films. *Life Without Soul* leaves behind several stills, publicity materials, advertisements in trade magazines, and reviews. Even less information is available on *Il Mostro*. Only a single still has been identified as belonging to the film, possibly showing the Creature himself. Two posters, one from 1922 and another from 1926 advertise local Italian screenings and show that the film was still in circulation six years after its release. Shreds of information on the film's

¹²³ Frederick C. Wiebel, *Edison's Frankenstein* (Duncan, Oklahoma: BearManor Media, 1990).

plot and visual style can also be gleaned from publicity materials from screenings in Belgium and Egypt, as well as contemporary Italian reviews.¹²⁴

Shelley does not use omniscient narration in the novel, relying instead on a nested system of first-person narratives with elements of epistolary form. The outer narrative shell is formed by the letters of Captain Robert Walton, an Arctic explorer with minimal direct connection to the events that form the core of the story. In the midst of his perilous expedition he encounters Victor Frankenstein, who is dying and consents to relate his tragic tale to Walton. Frankenstein's first-person account deals with his version of the events that led him to this point, and brings in an additional voice - that of the Creature he has created and abandoned. In a climactic encounter with his creator, the Creature reveals his highly developed intellectual abilities and verbosely relates his story from the moment of his creation to his reunion with Frankenstein. Ultimately, the novel has three narrators, each with his personal agenda and subjective viewpoint, and each edited by someone else. The Creature's account is re-told by Frankenstein, Frankenstein's story is chronicled (and possibly enhanced) by Walton, and Walton's version cycles back into the hands of Frankenstein who edits and adds to it. Not a single voice reaches the reader unmediated and every narrator remains unreliable.¹²⁵ The earliest cinematic adaptations promptly simplified this structure by discarding the outer frame along with the character of Captain Walton. Little is known of the plot of the 1920 Italian film, but Walton is definitely missing from both the 1910 Edison version and 1915's *Life Without Soul*. This simple alteration provided three major benefits to a film adaptation - the elimination of an extra narrator not involved in the central plotline,

¹²⁴ G. Giannini, "Rev. of 'Il Mostro Di Frankenstein', dir. Eugenio Testa," *Kines* 10 Sept. 1921.

¹²⁵ Levels of doubling in *Frankenstein* adaptations are discussed further in Chapter IV - "The Duality of the Silent Film Monster."

avoidance of a sprawling Arctic location that could adversely affect the film's budget, and most importantly, direct access to the perspective of Victor Frankenstein.

Both the 1910 and 1915 films focus narrowly on Frankenstein's unfiltered perspective and his dualistic connection with the Creature. The Edison film does not have an external frame at all, strongly hinting that Frankenstein and his creation are in fact one and the same and that the Creature is a physical projection of Frankenstein's dark side. This reading is reinforced by intertitles attributing the Creature's hideousness to the "evil" in Frankenstein's soul and a scene in which the Creature's reflection fades into that of Frankenstein as he rejects evil thoughts. *Life Without Soul* (1915) uses the device of a nightmare experienced by the film's protagonist, Victor Frawley as a result of reading Shelley's novel. This frame even more strongly presents Frankenstein as mentally unbalanced and the Creature as either a figment of his imagination or a projection of his troubled conscience. In both cases, the narrow, highly subjectivised and psychologically suspect POV of Frankenstein/Frawley guides the narrative and raises the implication that the Creature comes from inside his head/soul rather than physical, external sources. Ultimately, it is dispelled by the return of reason and consciousness.

In terms of overall plot, the 1910 Edison version is brief and straightforwardly structured, a clear and concise template for adjusting Shelley's complex novel to the requirements and possibilities of silent film. For added clarity, it is broken up into several episodic chunks, each introduced by an explanatory intertitle. Strongly evocative of 18th century chapter headings, these intertitles provide a one-sentence summary of the action about to unfold, phrased in terms that imply obvious moral connotations. This frank reinforcement of the film's moral messages was only a part

of its efforts to strengthen the source material's moralistic value. Advertisements for the film assured audiences that most of the novel's "repulsive situations" had been expunged in favour of "mystic and psychological" elements.¹²⁶ Commenting on film adaptations of *Frankenstein*, Martin Tropp labels the 1910 Edison film "a transitional piece" that "retained the structure of the melodramas while demonstrating the additional effects possible with film."¹²⁷ Shane Denson echoes this idea, attributing the film's transitional feel to a "contest between the respective appeals of a dramatic story and the film's special effects - a conflict of narrative integration and trick-film spectacle embodied...in a literal play of 'smoke and mirrors.'"¹²⁸

The challenge outlined by Denson - that of efficiently conveying a complex narrative through visual means - is a common concern for literary adaptations in silent film. Edison's *Frankenstein* and *Life Without Soul* resolve this dilemma by building their screenplays around key plot points combining a strong moral and narrative message with striking imagery. Both films bookend their plot with the creation sequence and Victor's marriage to his childhood sweetheart Elizabeth, emphasising the Creature and Elizabeth as doubles for the two conflicting halves of Victor's character. Both show Frankenstein's/Frawley's reunion with Elizabeth as a final negation of his evil deeds and a triumph of his better nature. The *Life Without Soul* synopsis describes Frawley's family and friends warning him against "the dangers of his invention." His redemption comes when the Creature has seemingly destroyed his family and he awakes to find them alive and "rushes to destroy his evil

¹²⁶ Christopher Frayling, *Mad, Bad and Dangerous?: the Scientist and the Cinema* (London: Reaktion, 2005) 56.

¹²⁷ Tropp 25.

¹²⁸ Shane Denson, *Postnaturalism: Frankenstein, Film, and the Anthropotechnical Interface* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2014) 102.

fluid.”¹²⁹ Edison’s *Frankenstein* heralds its protagonist’s salvation with the triumphant intertitle: “The creation of an evil mind is overcome by love and disappears.” The emphasis on Victor’s family and particularly his innocent, loving fiancée turns the upbeat ending into a victory of family values over unseemly ambition. Ultimately, both films transform Shelley’s story into a parable about a wayward and over-zealous youth accepting his role as a respectable member of society, rather than about an obsessed scientist destroyed by his own talents and aspirations.

Based on my analysis of each of the above monsters’ relationship with his literary source, changes in narrative structure were most commonly based on the following parameters: alterations in point of view to privilege the monster’s perspective; the foregrounding of key scenes with strong visual potential; the cutting and merging of non-central characters and the alteration of relationships between remaining characters to support a given message or attitude; the addition or reinforcement of romantic plotlines; modifications in the ages of characters, especially the monster (and usually in a younger direction); the incorporation of sources other than the original novel to replace or enrich certain themes and plotlines; narrative changes, compressions and additions meant to enhance the drama, suspense, or romance of the overall story; a narrower focus on the monster’s personal psychological experience and suffering. Many of these changes were instigated by the fact that these new retellings were conveyed in a different kind of language than their sources - the emerging language of film. The role of silent film language in remoulding,

¹²⁹ “Life Without Soul,” *AFI Catalog of Feature Films*, 29 Mar. 2015
 <<http://www.afi.com/members/catalog/DetailView.aspx?s=&Movie=16531>>.

reinterpreting, and culturally re-inscribing the monster figures under discussion will be explored in the next chapter.

Chapter III - The Cine-Literary Monster and the Language of Silent Film

Before moving on to more theoretical issues, it is important to examine some of the more practical and technical facets of the emerging and evolving language of silent cinema through which these narratives were filtered. I will focus on those aspects of cinematic language that were especially useful in translating monster characters and Gothic literary narratives into film. The films included in this thesis are broadly united in terms of time period (1897-1929) and geographical region (North America and Europe, mainly Germany and France). As this includes 30 years of film history and 10 different countries it is important to acknowledge the diversity of this corpus. These films are a cross-section of Silent Era technical and stylistic developments in the film medium and in emerging national cinemas. It would doubtless be enlightening to include an overview of the early film history of each country involved and chronicle the evolution of the film medium over these three decades. However, such a discussion could not be thoroughly explored within the confines of this thesis and has already been undertaken in numerous seminal works.¹³⁰

The films examined here are connected by their use of Silent Era cinematic techniques to engage with the figure of the Gothic literary monster and the themes he represents. This research deals specifically with the common characteristics, themes

¹³⁰ Among numerous works on the history and theory of silent film the following have been particularly helpful in providing background for this thesis: Richard Abel, ed. *Silent Film* (London: Athlone, 1996); *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Film Theory* (London: Routledge, 2014); Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, eds. *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, 6th ed. (New York: Oxford UP, 2004); British Film Institute, *Early and Silent Cinema: A Source Book* (London: British Film Institute, 1996); Thomas Elsaesser and Adam Barker, eds. *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative* (London: BFI Pub., 1990); Noel Carroll and Jin Choi, eds. *Philosophy of Film and Motion Pictures: An Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell Pub, 2000); Ian Aitken, *European Film Theory and Cinema a Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2001).

and narrative and stylistic patterns that bind these films within a single interrelated corpus. Notable cultural, historical and technical particularities in individual films will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. As the majority of the films discussed are French, German, or American I relied especially on historical and theoretical overviews of early cinema in these countries.¹³¹ Among studies more narrowly focused on specific topics within Silent Era cinema, I found the most relevant to be those dealing with: the development of cinematic language (especially the close-up, slow motion, the evolution of editing techniques, and special effects),¹³² the relationship between early cinema, theatre and other arts,¹³³ silent film as an art form,¹³⁴ the birth of the science fiction and horror genres,¹³⁵ and specific styles and

¹³¹ Among the resources I consulted on French silent cinema the following were especially useful in analysing my corpus: Richard Abel, *French Cinema: the First Wave, 1915-1929* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1984) and *French Film Theory and Criticism: A History/Anthology, 1907-1939. Volume 1: 1907-1929* (Princeton UP, 1993); David Bordwell, *French Impressionist Cinema: Film Culture, Film Theory, and Film Style* (North Stratford, NH: Ayer, 2002); Sarah Keller and Jason N Paul, *Jean Epstein: Critical Essays and New Translations* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam UP, 2012); and Alexander Graf and Dietrich Scheunemann, *Avant-Garde Film* (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2007).

German cinema: Paul Coates, *The Gorgon's Gaze: German Cinema, Expressionism, and the Image of Horror* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991); Collier, *From Wagner to Murnau; Eisner Haunted and Murnau* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1973); Führer Ross, eds. *Mass Media*; Anton Kaes, *Shell Shock Cinema: Weimar Culture and the Wounds of War* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2009); Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: a Psychological History of the German Film* (London: D. Dobson, 1947); David F Kuhns, *German Expressionist Theatre: the Actor and the Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997); and Ian Roberts, *German Expressionist Cinema: The World of Light and Shadow* (London: Wallflower, 2008).

American cinema: William K Everson, *American Silent Film* (New York: Oxford UP, 1978); Nancy Mowll Mathews et al. *Moving Pictures: American Art and Early Film, 1880-1910* (Manchester, Vt.: Hudson Hills Press, 2005); John T Soister et al., *American Silent Horror, Science Fiction and Fantasy Feature Films, 1913-1929* (Jefferson, N.C.; London: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2012).

¹³² See "The Close-Up" by Bela Balasz (273-275) and "The Face of Man" by Bela Balasz (275-281) on the evolution and meaning of the cinematic close-up in *Film Theory and Criticism*; Elder R. Brice, "Hans Richter and Viking Eggeling: The Dream of Universal Language and the Birth of The Absolute Film" in *Avant-Garde Film*. 3-54; Julie Brown and Annette Davison, *The Sounds of the Silents in Britain* (New York: Oxford UP, 2013); Ludovic Cortade, "The 'Microscope of Time': Slow Motion in Jean Epstein's Writings," *Jean Epstein* 143-160; Jean Epstein "Photogenie and the Imponderable," *French Film Theory and Criticism* 188-192.

¹³³ Ben Brewster and Lea Jacobs, *Theatre to Cinema: Stage Pictorialism and the Early Feature Film* (Oxford; New York: Oxford UP, 1997); David Mayer, *Stagestruck Filmmaker: D.W. Griffith & the American Theatre* (Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 2009); and Angela Dalle Vacche, *Cinema and Painting: How Art is Used in Film* (Austin: U of Texas P, 1996).

¹³⁴ Berys Gaut, *A Philosophy of Cinematic Art* (Cambridge UP, 2010).

movements in early cinema such as Expressionism, Impressionism, Surrealism, and avant-garde film in general.¹³⁶ The research presented in this thesis is meant to contribute to the following areas of silent film history and theory: literary adaptations in film, the history of cinematography, editing and special effects, auteur theory, the use of cinematic techniques to express psychological states, depictions of disability, deformity, and disfigurement in popular culture, the relationship of early cinema with other arts, the development of the cinematic close-up, and symbolic depictions of architectural spaces in film.

A vital aspect of my research concerns the adjustment and development of silent cinematic language to the demands of elaborate literary narratives with multiple characters, extensive dialogues, complex relationships, and abstract themes. The limitations of Silent Era cinema and the availability and evolution of particular cinematic tools in different periods had a strong impact on decisions made by filmmakers on questions of narrative structure, characterisation, relationship dynamics, and visual representations of psychological states. From the earliest films in this corpus onwards, it is evident that many of these decisions were informed by the fact that certain scenes, settings, and images from the literary source could be seen as more inherently visual/cinematic than others or more achievable with the techniques and tools available at a given time or to a particular studio. The search for scenes with pre-existing cinematic potential was in turn complimented by innovative techniques adopted and borrowed from other films or custom-designed to match the

¹³⁵ Frayling *Mad and Nightmare: The Birth of Horror* (London: BBC Books, 1996); Michael Benson, *Vintage Science Fiction Films, 1896-1949* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1985); and Everson *Classics*.

¹³⁶ Dietrich Scheunemann, *Expressionist Film - New Perspectives* (Rochester, NY : Camden House, 2003); Graf and Scheunemann *Avant-Garde Film*; Malte Hagener, *Moving Forward, Looking Back: The European Avant-Garde and the Invention of Film Culture, 1919-1939* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam UP, 2007); and Michael O'Pray, *The Avant-Garde Film: Forms, Themes and Passions* (London: Wallflower, 2003).

demands of the source material, pushing the cinematic medium to expand its expressive potential. The result of this process was a fruitful and dynamic exchange mobilising and fusing the resources of literature and film.

In translating the stories of Gothic literary monsters to the screen, Silent Era filmmakers explored the compositional possibilities of the cinematic frame and the moving image; camera angles (Point-of-View shots, Bird's-Eye-Views, Closeups, Tracking Shots, and more); developed lighting schemes that would work evocatively on film (rather than on stage); experimented with editing techniques (including temporal compression, continuous and discontinuous editing, suggestive editing and intellectual montage, rhythmic editing, and crosscutting); revisited the special effects techniques of 19th century stage illusionists while designing new effects made possible by the unique tools of the cinematic medium; adapted the arts of set, costume and makeup design to the requirements of film; established new modes of gestural communication; and sought the potential for artistic expression in a medium born of technology and mechanical replication.

III.1. Composition, Framing, and Camera Angles

The development of cinematic composition and framing and experimentation with camera angles played an important role in the construction of the monster character on film. These techniques underwent revolutionary developments and advances throughout the three decades of the Silent Era. This is vividly reflected in the technical and stylistic evolution of the Gothic literary monster film. Earlier films (especially before the mid-1910s) still bear a close relationship with the stage,

sometimes directly filming theatrical adaptations of a novel rather than adapting it for the screen. From the late 1910s into the 1920s, a greater variety of shot types and camera angles appears and becomes standard in literary monster films as they move further away from their theatrical roots.

The lost 1908 adaptation of *Jekyll and Hyde* directed by Otis Turner, for instance, was essentially an abbreviated recording of the Fish and Forepaugh production. It was shot on stage with an opening and closing curtain and much of the same choreography used in the play.¹³⁷ The staging and cinematography of Edison Studios' 1910 *Frankenstein* are permeated with the same theatrical aesthetic as the rest of the production. There are no close-ups and the movements of the actors are confined within clearly defined parameters. Each scene has a fixed camera position and all of its action is structured to fit into that particular framing. The actors are invariably shown full-length and from a distance as they would be seen on stage. 1911's *Notre Dame de Paris* (Capellani/Krauss), which reportedly aimed for ambitious technical and stylistic standards for its time, uses confined theatrical sets, a static, eye-level camera, flat lighting and full-body shots of the actors.¹³⁸ As in a stage production, the movement and emphasis of a given shot are produced by the poses and placement of the actors rather than through close-ups or unusual camera angles. Interestingly the 1912 Thanhouser production of *Jekyll and Hyde* already demonstrates a broader variety of shots, using mostly medium shots for interiors and long shots for exteriors to give a wider sense of the surrounding space. However, even as late as in 1921, the framing and compositions in the Herzka/Höbling adaptation of *The Man Who Laughs* are still rather theatrical, with the camera placed

¹³⁷ "Rev. of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, dir. Otis Turner," *Moving Picture World* 7 Mar. 1908: 194-5.

¹³⁸ Louis Reeves Harrison, "Rev. of Notre Dame de Paris, dir. Albert Capellani," *Moving Picture World* 16 Dec. 1911.

at approximately eye-level. Most of the images seen in stills are group scenes in long-shot or mid-shots of smaller groups and single individuals.



Figure 21: Example of a theatrical composition in *Das Grinsende Gesicht* (*The Grinning Face*) (Olympic Films 1921), directed by Julius Herzka. Publicity still. Copy obtained by author from the Deutsches Kinemathek, Berlin.

Throughout the 20s camerawork in monster films grows more and more intricate and dynamic, incorporating vertiginous high-angle shots, Bird's-Eye-Views, Point-of-View shots reflecting the perspectives of various characters, close-ups, tracking shots and other moving camera shots. By 1928, the complex and dynamic camerawork in Leni/Veidt's *The Man Who Laughs*, boldly uses moving camera shots and striking compositions. Sprawling establishing shots that reveal the scale and grandeur of the sets are interspersed with tight, intimate close-ups, usually of Gwynplaine himself. This exponentially growing range of cinematic tools allowed

filmmakers more space for visual experimentation, mixing, matching, and alternating shooting styles to convey emotional states, create atmosphere, and wordlessly express psychological conditions and characterisation.



Figure 22: A dynamic composition in *The Man Who Laughs* (Universal 1929), directed by Paul Leni. Conrad Veidt as Gwynplaine and Olga Baclanova as Duchess Josiana. Publicity still.

Bird's-Eye-View shots became especially useful in characterising such literary monster figures as Quasimodo, the Hunchback of Notre Dame and Erik, the Phantom of the Opera. Twelve years after the Capellani/Krauss adaptation of *Hunchback*, the Worsley/Chaney version employs numerous Bird's-Eye-View shots from the top of the bell tower to represent Quasimodo's perspective, allowing the audience to see the world through his eyes. Extreme high-angle shots suggest Quasimodo's physical distance from the crowd beneath his bell tower as well as his sense of isolation from society. In 1925's *Phantom of the Opera*, a high-angle shot immediately preceding

the collapse of the famous chandelier fleetingly hints at Erik's own perspective. This dynamic sequence is presented from multiple, intercut angles but this shot presents a view that can only be accessible to Erik at that moment and may also be meant to reflect his emotionally heightened state. A similar technique is used in F.W. Murnau's *Faust* (1926) to convey the cyclical nature of Faust's journey. A high-angle shot corresponding to the view from Faust's window overlooks a crowd of dying plague victims whom he is unable to help - a pivotal moment in his decision to accept Mephisto's offer. This shot is paralleled at the end of the film by a similarly composed high-angle view of Gretchen being led to the stake. Both scenes are framed from Faust's physical vantage point and suggest his desire to bridge the distance and prevent the suffering and death unfolding before him. Reversing the impact of the earlier scene, the latter POV shot leads to directly to Faust's rejection of Mephisto's influence and his decision to perish with Gretchen.

In order to shift to a more intimate perspective on the action, centred around the experiences of the monster himself, silent literary monster films often exploit POV shots. These shots are usually meant to represent the perspective of the monster figure himself. Such shots, framed to mimimic the monster's vantage point, reveal information about his thought process, his position within the scene and his attitude towards the characters and events that surround him. In *The Man Who Laughs* (Leni 1928), shots representing Gwynplaine's POV serve to elucidate and reveal details of his thoughts by providing the viewer with glimpses of his subjective experience. As his eyes scan the laughing, jeering faces of his (diegetic) audience during a performance, the view pauses on the serious, intent face of Josiana mirroring Gwynplaine's sightline. Her image expands and overlays the yelling crowd as he

focuses on her. Gwynplaine becomes both voyeur and subject, gazing surreptitiously at the alluring Josiana as she relentlessly pursues him with her lustful eyes. Not restricted to the monster alone, reaction and POV shots help to build up his aura of otherness by filtering his image through the perceptions of the other characters. In this case, Josiana's explicit behaviour from Gwynplaine's perspective is intercut with images of his face and figure from her perspective, simultaneously objectifying them both while conveying their subjective perceptions of one another. This exchange draws as much attention to Josiana's deviance as to Gwynplaine's, as she projects her sexually perverse perspective onto his deformity.



Figure 23: POV shots in *The Man Who Laughs* (Leni, 1929). Josiana (Olga Baclanova) and Gwynplaine (Conrad Veidt) observe one another. Screen grabs taken by author.

Robert Wiene's *Orlacs Hände* (1924) expands the idea on the POV shot to visualise the flow of Orlac's thoughts. Shadows, focus shifts and fades enhance the dreamlike, haunted atmosphere of the film using the eye of the camera as a surrogate for the *inner* eyes of the characters. As Orlac reads the details of Vasseur's crimes, the scene blurs out in sections, and fades into a hazy image of the hilt of the murderer's dagger, and then a close-up of his finger prints.

Multiple, intersecting POV shots are sometimes used in silent monster films to project an invisible or seemingly supernatural monster figure. In blurring the line

between Erik's human form and the Opera House, Julian/Chaney's *Phantom of the Opera* (1925) is somewhat unusual in its avoidance of POV shots from the monster's (Erik's) point of view. There are numerous shots throughout the film suggesting the viewpoints of different characters (mainly Christine) but very few that can potentially be ascribed to Erik. The audience is invited into his subterranean world along with Christine, but is never given privileged access to his perspective. His appearances are invariably made in the presence of other characters, who are presumably able to either see him or hear him. The film leaves him with no cinematic space of his own, as though he exists only when interacting with others. Even his shadowy appearances on the wall *outside* Christine's dressing room are made only when she can hear his voice. These images can easily be read as a construction of her imagination rather than actual shadows on a real wall.

In Gothic silent adaptations, POV shots used in conjunction with close-ups and reaction shots serve in many cases as a visual analogy to the Gothic novel's explanatory monologue, revealing information about the workings of a character's mind on an internal or subjective level. In the Robertson/Barrymore version of *Jekyll and Hyde* for instance, Jekyll's lengthy explanation about the confusing yet tantalising power of vice that drew him into his daring experiment is replaced by a sequence of wordless but meaningful images. A series of POV shots from Jekyll's perspective shows tight close-ups of the dancing Gina's seductively smiling face, her waving, bare arms, and her barely concealed bosom. These views are intercut with close-ups of Jekyll's slightly bewildered, but tensely attentive facial expression as he begins to feel the influence of temptation.

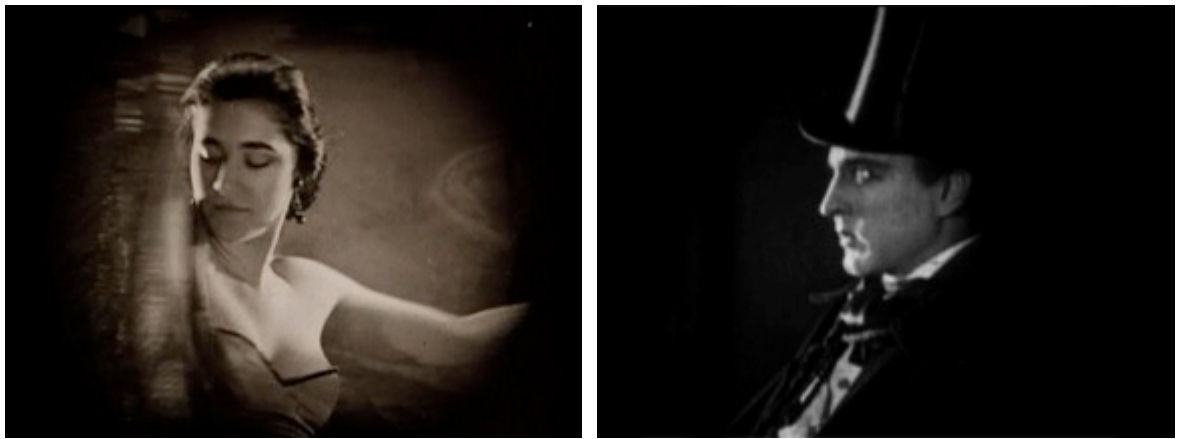


Figure 24: Gina (Nita Naldi) shown through Jekyll (John Barrymore)'s POV in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Paramount 1920), directed by John S. Robertson. Screen grabs taken by author.

Close-ups are also used to reveal emotional subtleties that would have been virtually invisible from a distance. Close-ups proliferate in Worsley/Chaney's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1923), exhibiting Quasimodo (Lon Chaney)'s elaborately constructed facial prosthetics and at the same time picking up on the emotional nuances beneath the surface. Aside from exploring his deformity, the close-ups help to gradually unfold and develop his character. The first, jarring view of his face portrays him as the grotesquely grimacing "freak" seen by the hostile crowd, but as the film progresses the significance of the close-ups deepens, revealing the human longing and suffering within the twisted frame. Close-ups play a particularly important role in transformation sequences in silent *Jekyll and Hyde* adaptations, helping to build up suspense in ways that could not have been achieved in a theatrical setting. As Jekyll's transformations into Hyde become involuntary, closer views can pick up details like an altered facial expression, a flash of fear in the eyes, or a twitching hand to foreshadow Jekyll's impending loss of control even before a full-scale transformation takes place. This type of usage is illustrated very effectively by the final shots of *Der Andere* (1913), which uses few makeup effects

to delineate the change. As Hallers's fiancée expresses her joy over the fact of his recovery, a darkly vacant expression overspreads his face, making it clear that the threat of the Other is still there, just beneath the surface.

Moving camera shots are not used very frequently in Silent Era literary monster films, but when they do appear they are designed to create a startling sense of menace and monumentality. F.W. Murnau placed a camera on a drifting boat to give an eerie, unsettling view of Count Orlock's approaching ship in *Nosferatu* (1922). In 1928, Leni's *The Man Who Laughs* features a brief shot taken from the top of a moving ferris wheel to convey the unbalanced and chaotic world of the fairground. Shaky and disorienting, this device echos Gwynplaine's own sense of discomfort and instability. Another moving camera shot in the same film tracks away from Josiana as she walks head on towards the camera (or Queen Anne), lending energy and forcefulness to her movements.

III.2. Lighting Design

Stylistic developments in cinematic lighting design contributed especially to the depiction of supernaturally-tinged monster figures, phantoms, and unnatural beings. In the earliest adaptations of *Jekyll and Hyde* and *Frankenstein*, for example, the lighting is flat and even, geared towards maximum visibility rather than dramatic impact. In later films, haunting, atmospheric lighting effects contribute towards constructing a suggestive environment that reflects the mood of its occupant or builds mystery and narrative tension. In Worsley/Chaney's *Hunchback* (1923), the dim Expressionistic lighting and the Cathedral's columns, throwing long, diagonal

shadows across the nave, strengthen the mysterious Gothic aura of the sets and fill the atmosphere with a sense of ever-present lurking menace.

A large part of the Julian/Chaney *Phantom of the Opera*'s presentation of Erik and his world also comes from lighting design. Alternating lighting schemes lend an additional symbolic dimension to Ben Carré's sets, and shadows are an integral part of Chaney's performance. An intertitle at the beginning of the film casually sums up the figurative and mythic dichotomy between the upper and lower worlds of the Opera House - "who thinks of cellars - dismal haunts of creeping things - when the Paris Opera stages a ballet?" The distinction between opulent spectacle and tormented shadows is carried through the entire film. The upstairs realm glows with light and in the masquerade scene, with colour as well. Polished surfaces catch and refract the light and the ceiling is dominated by a massive chandelier, dripping with glittering crystals.



Figure 25: Erik (Lon Chaney) in the masquerade scene, shot in two-colour Technicolor, from *The Phantom of the Opera* (Julian, 1925). Screen grab taken by author.

In some films, lighting began to be used not only to establish a particular space, but as a mobile trait belonging to a specific character and pursuing him or her throughout the film. In Worsley/Chaney's *Hunchback* (1923), each of the main characters is assigned a lighting scheme. Esmeralda and Phoebus for instance, are constantly bathed in a hazy, glowing rim light almost regardless of setting. The fluffy, wavy hair worn by both absorbs and diffuses the light, surrounding their heads with halos. The malicious Jehan in his dark garments and sweeping cloak drifts in and out of the shadows concealing his identity in their depths as he later conceals it in his brother's white robes. Most of the characters who inhabit the upper regions in Julian Chaney's *Phantom* (1925) are shown in pale or white garments, including Christine, the corps du ballet and even Raoul. The draperies in Christine's dressing room are also lightly-toned, reflecting the illumination back into the room and bathing everything in a soft, atmospheric glow. The cellars, on the other hand, are the domain of a gloomy secrecy. Their unearthly half-light picks out sections of the dungeon-like walls and Gothic arches, creating a network of intersecting shapes on the floor.

Christine's crossing into Erik's realm is rendered as a struggle between light and darkness. A natural part of his grim environment, Erik is swathed in black garments. He blends easily with the black gondola he steers across the inky waters of his underground lake. Even the horse he offers Christine is shown as black rather than white as in the novel. Christine's newly-manifested shadow does join Erik's on the wall, but the glow of her light, frothy gown breaks through the surrounding darkness. A long white veil trails down the steps and across the water in her wake, drawing the light with it and tying her to the upper realm. Clarens sees this scene as having had a

direct influence on Cocteau's *La Belle et la Bête* (1946) - another story of a pure young heroine whisked away into a dark, supernatural realm.¹³⁹

III.3. Editing

Fairly early in the Silent Era, film editing became an essential tool in literary monster films, echoing its use in other early films with historical or literary narratives. Gothic literary sources, with their convoluted plots and potential for special effects such as transformation sequences, did not provide effective material for one-shot films. Even the earliest and most concise silent monster films display some form of basic continuity editing, switching between multiple settings and compressing time. Barely 15 minutes long, Edison's *Frankenstein* (1910) leaves only the bare bones of the novel's plot but it jumps smoothly between several settings in different countries and hints at the passage of time between scenes.

Joining the editing experiments of the mid-1910s, silent monster films built up the psychological and narrative complexity of their stories through the creative application of crosscutting. Its use by such filmmakers as D.W. Griffith in the epic historical films *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) and *Intolerance* (1916) provided useful illustrations of how this technique could make it possible to depict multiple parallel plotlines, reveal the emotional reactions of different characters to the same event, create suspense and tension, and uncover intricate and conflicted relationships between characters - all valuable tools for literary monster narratives. A chain of scenes in *Nosferatu* (Murnau 1922) combines all of the above uses to reveal a bond

¹³⁹ Carlos Clarens, *Horror Movies: An Illustrated Survey* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1968) 67.

between Count Orlock and Ellen. Cutting between Ellen's sleepwalking episodes and scenes in Orlock's castle and later his sea journey, Murnau develops two plotlines in several different geographic locations. The cuts grow more frequent, building up suspense by suggesting the vampire's inexorable approach. Finally the tension is broken by a narratively ambiguous crosscutting sequence between Orlock's approaching ship and Ellen waking with the cry "I must go to him. He's coming!!!" and racing to the sea shore. Her husband Hutter is approaching as well, but by land rather than sea. The use of crosscutting here not only advances the external narrative but helps build a troubling internal subtext.

The Phantom of the Opera (Julian 1925) uses crosscutting to enrich the drama and tension of scenes taking place within a single setting. One of the earliest adaptations to position the unmasking scene as a major narrative turning point, the Julian/Chaney version's use of editing is no less pivotal to the scene's impact than the disfigured face itself. Staged in a confined area of the set, the scene cuts between the surreptitiously approaching Christine, the oblivious Erik, and establishing shots showing their relative positions, the pacing of the cuts reflecting Christine's growing apprehension at what she is about to see. When she finally snatches away the mask, cuts between close-ups simultaneously reveal the two characters' emotional reactions to the event, abrupt jumps to Christine's POV force the audience to see Erik through her horrified eyes, and a sudden cut to a towering view from over Erik's shoulder reflects her new perception of him as an overpowering evil force.

Suggestive editing takes the juxtaposition of images further, delving into the literary monster's vast symbolic dimension and serving as a visual proxy for literary metaphor. Images of animals and insects intercut with views of human characters

succinctly accent elements of a character's personality or attitude. *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1923) and *Nosferatu* (1922) both use the associatively rich figure of a spider. In *Nosferatu*, the spider appears in Knock/Renfield's cell, indicating his vampiric tendencies and foreshadowing his alliance with Count Orlock. In *Hunchback*, a sudden close-up of a spider spinning its web during the seduction scene between Phoebus and Esmeralda bluntly suggests the young gypsy's vulnerability and the dangers of her romantic ensnarement. Jean Epstein's *Chute de la Maison Usher* (1928) shows that this type of juxtaposition is no less meaningful when only half of the comparison is an organic life form. In the same way that Poe's story binds the House and its owners through parallel descriptions and shared adjectives, Epstein draws visual links through suggestive editing. Views of the mentally disintegrating Roderick are revealingly combined with images of instability within the House, such as a collapsing pile of books that pushes open a closet door with a mysterious inner force, inches away from bringing down the suit of armour in front of it, torrents of dry leaves scraping along the corridors, and the trembling bell of a ringing clock.

Towards the end of the 1920s, some monster films strive to abandon the constraints of narrative and literal symbolism altogether, using rhythmic and discontinuous editing to emphasise the themes of fragmentation and decay that are at the core of the monster figure. The highly experimental Watson/Webber *Usher* (1928) merges characters and sets into a kaleidoscopic collage of rhythmically edited images. Fusing cinema with contemporary art movements, the film recalls Hans Richter's statements about the ability of film to "dissect" movement and "reconstruct" an object in cinematic terms "just as the cubists dissected and rebuilt in

pictorial terms.” He adds that the “magic qualities” of film allow it to create a dream-like environment similar to that of Surrealist art, completely liberated “from the conventional story and its chronology.”¹⁴⁰

III.4. Special Effects

Special effects are among the most important tools in translating literary monster narratives and Gothic imagery to the screen through methods only available to the cinematic medium. An astounding array of special effects techniques is represented within the only 66 silent films analysed in this research, including but not limited to: replacements and transformations, double exposures, superimpositions, negative projection, animation, manipulation of frame rates, tinting and colour processing, distortion through the use of prisms and mirrors, water, fire and fog effects, miniature sets, and visual representations of sound. Gothic literary monsters, with their accompanying themes of duality, disembodiment, Otherness, the uncanny, and the supernatural provide fruitful opportunities for the advancement of special effects. In silent film adaptations, these effects can have both an aesthetic and a profound symbolic value, simultaneously highlighting the cinematic medium’s distinction from other art forms in its reliance on time, movement, and illusion. A filmmaker’s choice of techniques and the way they are applied can reveal a great deal about his or her understanding of film form, its relationship to “reality” and subjectivity, and the distinction between using special effects for their aesthetic or philosophical qualities. Sometimes, the choice of source material and the narrative changes made were

¹⁴⁰ Brice 19.

directly intended to showcase a particular type of effect or to convey a specific filmmaker's approach to constructing non-verbal film language. Scenes that had been only implied in the novel, that had played a minor role in the narrative, and/or were difficult to recreate in stage adaptations, were reappraised for their value as effects vehicles. Thus, scenes such as the transformation of Jekyll into Hyde, the falling chandelier in *Phantom*, Quasimodo scaling the facade of Notre Dame in *Hunchback*, or Dracula and Jonathan Harker's carriage journey through the haunted forest, were turned into key plot points in silent film adaptations and became canonical for later cinematic adaptations of their respective novels.

Modes of constructing "magical" transformations are among the strongest points of divergence between theatrical and early cinematic monster adaptations. The staging and design of such sequences is a central concern for *Jekyll and Hyde* films in particular. With the ability to edit, compress time, and modify shot footage in postproduction, the cinematic Jekyll does not need to hide behind furniture modifying his costume and makeup before a live audience. Even if the sequence itself is little more than a cross fade, the sense of immediacy and wonder is heightened by the fact that the change seems to happen right before the viewer's eyes. Cinematic tricks such as fades, replacements, and cutaways, even a move as basic as stopping the camera and applying the Hyde makeup between frames creates a smoother illusion than some of the contrivances described in the Fish and Forepaugh stage directions.¹⁴¹ Such cinematic effects had been explored and developed by illusionists/filmmakers like Georges Méliès since the late 1800s. Contemporary reviews of the two lost, unauthorised *Jekyll and Hyde* adaptations *Den*

¹⁴¹ George F. Fish and Luella Forepaugh, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Or, A Mis-spent Life: Or, A Mis-spent Life; a Drama in Four Acts* (New York: Samuel French, 1897) 3.

Skaebnesvangre Opfindelse (1910) and *Der Januskopf* (1920) specifically offer praise for their transformation sequences and their skilful deployment of techniques that would have been unavailable on stage.¹⁴²

Multiple exposures and superimpositions are used in silent monster films (especially in the 1920s) to show phantoms and supernatural presences (as in 19th century trick photography), to represent dreams and hallucinations experienced by the monster himself, and to project the monster's thoughts and memories to the audience. Visiting the set of Victor Sjöström's enormously influential Swedish film *The Phantom Carriage* (1921), F.W. Murnau noted several innovative techniques that he adapted for his own spectral apparitions in *Nosferatu* (1922).¹⁴³ This included the use of multiple exposures and multilayered compositing to create the illusion of a ghostly, translucent figure that can seemingly pass through solid walls. In *Nosferatu*, similar methods allow the supernatural Count Orlock to fade in and out of shots like a shimmering mirage and pass through closed doors. This effect turns Orlock into an unearthly personification of evil, capable of penetrating every aspect of human life, remaining unseen and unrecognised.

Six years later, Jean Epstein harnesses the effect's accumulated weight of supernatural associations to foreshadow approaching death in a character who has not yet crossed over in *Chute de la Maison Usher* (1928). As she poses for Roderick, Madeline's figure is split into a multitude of superimposed images of stillness and movement, combining positive and negative prints. Reminiscent of the flickering candle flames by Roderick's canvas, this image evokes the growing fissure between

¹⁴² See Ludwig Brauner, "Rev. of *Der Januskopf*, dir. F.W. Murnau," *Der Kinematograph* 5 Sep. 1920; and "Rev. of *Den Skaebnesvangre Opfindelse*, dir. August Blom," *Moving Picture World* 24 Sept. 1910: 685.

¹⁴³ Eisner, *Murnau* 88.

Madeline's material form and her life force, which Roderick seems to be distilling into his painting. Epstein highlights cinema's ability to transcend linear perceptions of time and shows Madeline as both a living woman and a phantom-in-the-making within a single, unified image.



Figure 26: Superimpositions in *La Chute de la Maison Usher* (Films Jean Epstein 1928), directed by Jean Epstein, Marguerite Gance as Madeline Usher. Screen grab taken by author.

Progressing from the fading body to the unraveling mind, multiple exposures help visualise the monster's nightmares, fantasies, and hallucinations, exposing his tormented thought processes to the audience. In Roberson/Barrymore's *Jekyll and Hyde* (1920), Jekyll is plagued by increasingly threatening visions as he begins to lose control over his transformations. His first transformation is accompanied by the superimposed face of Carew, smirking mischievously and goading him on. The face takes over the frame, crushing the small, wavering figure of Jekyll just as it crushes his last inhibitions. The apparitions grow more surrealistic in concord with Jekyll's

mental breakdown, when an enormous, translucent, spotlighted spider scuttles into his bedroom. Superimposed over the image of the sleeping Jekyll (Barrymore) the creature is actually Hyde (also Barrymore) with a mass of spider legs sprouting from his back. The use of double exposures allows Barrymore to portray both halves of Jekyll's identity in one shot as the two forms fuse into one before the viewer's eyes.



Figure 27: Multiple exposures used in a nightmare sequence in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Robertson, 1920). John Barrymore as Jekyll and as illusory tarantula/Hyde. Screen grab taken by author.

Orlacs Hände (Wiene 1924), focusing as it does on the psychological rather than physical consequences of Orlac's horrific accident, also uses multiple exposures to convey its protagonist's sense of the unreality of his situation. Threatening faces and objects seem to materialise out of thin air before his eyes and an enormous fist descends from a cloud of smoke above his hospital bed. The translucency of the images and their nightmarish content defines the line between diegetic reality and

Orlac's traumatic hallucinations. In all of these cases, the use of multiple exposures creates a clear but visibly tenuous image suggesting the product of a feverish imagination rather than a physical confrontation.

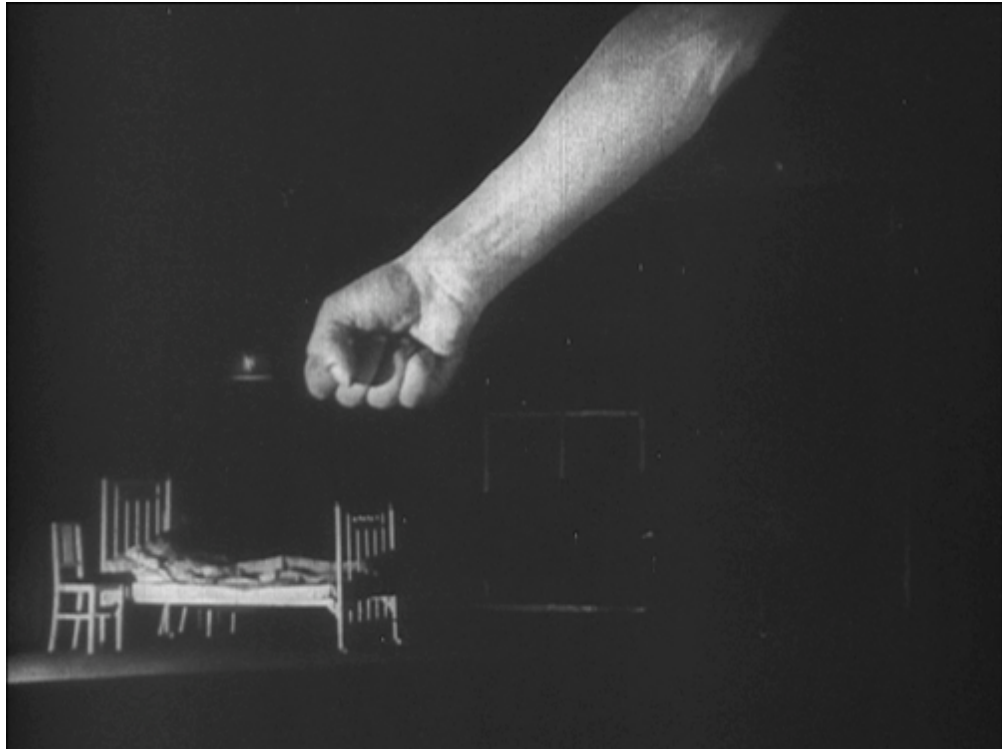


Figure 28; Double exposure used to create an apparition in *Orlacs Hände* (Berolina Film GmbH 1924), directed by Robert Wiene, starring Conrad Veidt. Screen grab taken by author.

Webber/Watson's 1928 *Fall of the House of Usher* uses multiple exposures to create abstraction and fragmentation rather than to construct clear narrative sequences. The warped psychology of the Ushers permeates the fabric of the film as human bodies, fragments of set, shadows and random props are layered one on top of the other in innumerable, intersecting exposures. The spectator's eye is led into the House through a jagged tear exposed over a shifting network of geometric shadows representing the walls of the House. The sequence alludes to Poe's "barely perceptible fissure," making "its way down the wall in a zigzag direction, until it

became lost in the sullen waters of the tarn.”¹⁴⁴ Inside, a sense of fluidity and decomposition is created through superimposed images of staircases shot under various angles and distorted by prisms, forming abstract patterns and converging upon the collapsing figure of Madeline as though absorbing her into the body of the House.

F.W. Murnau’s 1920 *Jekyll and Hyde* adaptation *Der Januskopf* offers an interesting example of what may be termed “false superimposition.” In an elaborately planned and choreographed nightmare sequence Jekyll is besieged by an ever-multiplying swarm of Hydes that surround and overwhelm him.



Figure 29: “False superimposition” used in a nightmare sequence in *Der Januskopf* (Decla-Bioscop AG 1920), directed by F.W. Murnau, starring Conrad Veidt. Lost film. Publicity still.

The exact techniques used for this scene are uncertain as all prints are now lost. While multiple exposures could have been used, surviving production stills have led Lotte Eisner to suggest that a crowd of extras in matching costumes and makeup

¹⁴⁴ Edgar Allan Poe, *The Fall of the House of Usher* (Champaign, Ill.: Project Gutenberg, 1999) 7.

were used instead.¹⁴⁵ Possibly, this technique was meant to reference the layering and superimposition created by multiple exposures while preserving the three-dimensionality of the space and the solidity of the figures themselves.



Figure 30: The phantom forest sequence in *Nosferatu* (Murnau, 1922). Screen grab taken by author.

Some silent films combined the translucency of multiple exposures with the eeriness of negative images. Such usage can be seen in Sjöström's *The Phantom Carriage* (1921), Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922), Epstein's *Usher* (1928) and other contemporary films with paranormal themes. The effect produced by the reversal of light and shade in an undeveloped negative instantly lends an aura of the uncanny to a shot that may not be inherently frightening. Paying direct homage to Sjöström's ghostly carriage, Murnau left Orlock and Hutter's carriage journey through the forest in *Nosferatu* entirely in negatives. In *Nosferatu*, negative images are generally used

¹⁴⁵ Eisner, *Murnau* 32-3.

without multiple exposures, relying on the unnatural look of the reversal itself to signify a vampiric presence. The effect is echoed on a smaller scale in depicting the spider in Knock/Renfield's cell, reinforcing its use as a symbol of Knock's psychological enslavement to the vampire.

Manipulations in tone and shade can also be created by tinting positives or employing other colour processes. Tinting is used widely in silent films alongside lighting effects to indicate the time of day, differentiate between indoor and outdoor settings, or to set the mood. A 1913 adaptation of *Jekyll and Hyde* starring Murdoch MacQuarrie and directed by Charles Urban was even reportedly shot in full colour and involved a complicated network of double-speed projectors and coloured filters.¹⁴⁶ The climactic masquerade scene in *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925) was shot in two-colour technicolor to emphasise the drama of the scene and showcase the Phantom's striking crimson Red Death costume.

Animation techniques are used in silent Gothic monster films to illustrate the monster's supernatural abilities or origins. In *Nosferatu* (1922), stop motion animation is used to show the vampire's magical powers. When he prepares to leave his ship, the fabric covering the hatch appears to lift of its own accord. One scene shows the lid of his coffin opening on its own and Orlock rising out of it with no apparent support. As he approaches the door of his new house with a coffin, they both dissolve through the door. In Edison's *Frankenstein* (1910), the Creature's build-up process is almost entirely animated and shot in reverse. Some films combined animation techniques with miniature sets and props to accommodate scenes of large-scale destruction, such as the spectacular dissolution of the House of

¹⁴⁶ Rigby, *American Gothic* 15.

Usher in Jean Epstein's 1928 adaptation of Poe's novella. Merging shots of miniature exteriors with full-scale interiors, Epstein uses actual and superimposed flames to build a frightening, supernatural scene. Flames and smoke begin to erupt inside the House and all around the almost oblivious Roderick. Some of the fires are traceable to specific sources like a wind-tossed curtain incinerated by a stray candle, while others bear a much more mystical appearance, materialising with no apparent cause or in areas that are unlikely to burst into flame of their own accord. When Roderick reunites with his undead bride, the two are encircled by a ritualistic ring of flames on the floor, which had not been burning only a split second earlier. The House proceeds to transform into an unquenchable inferno, the fires assuming an increasingly symbolic and non-naturalistic aspect.

The Watson/Webber adaptation of *Usher*, made in the same year, uses a more illusory system to convey destruction and decomposition. Instead of destroying miniature sets or using stop motion animation, Watson and Webber combined handmade prisms with triangular glass columns, mirrors and other devices to create kaleidoscopic effects, superimpositions, fragmented images and visual rhythms.¹⁴⁷ Almost every shot in the resulting film is an effects shot. Layers of translucent, superimposed images merge and separate, doubling one another, deconstructing, multiplying and shattering into fragments. One of the sequences depicting Madeline's return from the grave turns a close up of her face into a geometric composition, twisting and turning its multiplied shards across the screen. There is a strong sense of disembodiment as the characters' bodies fuse effortlessly and indiscriminately with the sets and with each other, becoming fragments of a single

¹⁴⁷ Watson 887.

entity. Nothing is stable, solid, or permanent and both people and spaces are in a constant state of kinetic metamorphosis. The *Boston Evening Transcript* referred to it as “a cinematic danse macabre” with “a strange reiterant rhythm” that makes everything appear as though it moves to music - a mobile, ever-changing composition akin to “a fluid mosaic.”¹⁴⁸ The very fabric of the film is in a continuous state of deconstruction just like the doomed House.



Figure 31: Fragmentation and deconstruction in *The Fall of the House of Usher* (Watson and Webber, 1928). Hildegard Watson as Madeline Usher. Screen grab taken by author.

Alongside effects that manipulated space, scale, transparency, and colour some Silent Era filmmakers experimented with manipulations of time and frame rate to create a sense of threatening or supernatural speed or conversely, to freeze time and draw out the tension of a symbolic or emotional image. Sudden accelerations in frame rate jarringly emphasise moments of danger or blend smoothly with the fabric of the film to simulate speed in a scene that was shot at a slower rate for technical or

¹⁴⁸ Evelyn Gerstein, “Rev. of *Fall of the House of Usher*, dir. James Sibley Watson,” *Boston Evening Transcript* 25 May 1929.

safety reasons. Count Orlock's movements, as he loads his coffins of earth onto a cart in *Nosferatu* are given an eerie speed that alarms the watching Hutter, reinforcing his belief that his host is superhuman. In *Phantom of the Opera* (1925), sped-up footage creates the illusion that the Opera's heavy chandelier is plummeting with frightful force onto the heads of the audience, when in reality, its descent was slow and controlled to avoid accidents.

Epstein's *Usher* uses the opposite effect - slow motion - to uncover the relativity of time, movement and perception.¹⁴⁹ Interpreting slow motion as both "a 'tragedy' of duration" and a "microscope of time," Epstein emphasises the "tension between movement and immobility," magnifying otherwise imperceptible natural vibrations and movements, and lending monumentality to their unraveling.¹⁵⁰ He builds a shared wordless rhythm between the human and non-human counterparts of the House of Usher by applying the same effect to both. The same type of lingering, haunting slow motion close-up reveals the shades of emotion crossing Roderick's face as he mourns the dead Madeline, and reveals the ceaseless, hidden movements of the objects that inhabit the House, unveiling their sentient energy. In the words of Tom Gunning, Epstein conveys "a universal vibration shared by the soul of things and the structures of the psyche, invoking the senses of both vision and sound (and even touch) placed before us on the screen."¹⁵¹

Although the films discussed in this thesis are all silent, they do engage in creative and sometimes surprising ways with the idea of sound. Almost every Silent Era screening would be accompanied by some form of aural accompaniment, most

¹⁴⁹ Laurent Guido, "'The Supremacy of the Mathematical Poem': Jean Epstein's Conceptions of Rhythm," *Jean Epstein* 143–160. 154–5

¹⁵⁰ Ludovic Cortade, "The 'Microscope of Time': Slow Motion in Jean Epstein's Writings," *Jean Epstein* 161–176. 162

¹⁵¹ Tom Gunning, "Preface," *Jean Epstein* 13–22. 19

frequently in the form of a non-diegetic musical score that enhanced the atmosphere of a scene, helped build emotional tension, or drew the attention of the audience to an important moment in the plot. However, a visual approximation of *diegetic* sound can be found in silent films as well. Literary descriptions of sounds in Gothic narratives are powerful devices for raising suspense, evoking fear, or heralding the monster's approach, and this component is not necessarily lost in Silent Era adaptations. The arrival of the visitor in Watson/Weber's *Usher* is announced by a moving collage of ringing bells that seem to bounce off of each other's vibrations and fill the screen with the energy of their inaudible sound waves - a direct visual representation of sound. The film uses no intertitles for narration or dialogue, but it makes compelling use of text to convey the horror of the sounds described by Poe in the final scene of the story. Sound, both imagined and real, forms the core of this scene's dramatic impact in Poe's original, as the words being read aloud by the visitor are echoed by the sounds of Madeline breaking out of her coffin. In Watson and Webber's film, the words rise as ghostly, oscillating letters from the pages of an open book, aligning themselves to spell out "Crack", "Ripped", "Scream", etc. The force and beat of the sounds they represent is conveyed by their varying arrangements and distortions, expanding, flashing, tearing violently across the screen, crowding it with jumbled letters or trembling fretfully in the shadows.

Paul Leni's 1928 adaptation of *The Man Who Laughs* incorporates recorded music and sound effects, but its most narratively poignant representation of sound is primarily visual. Attempting to delude the blind Dea into believing that Gwynplaine is still with her and that they are performing in front of a large audience, her foster father Ursus gets a handful of clowns to surround her with shouts and applause. In

the absence of vision, her awareness of the scene before her is based exclusively on what she hears, distorting her perception of reality. In the film, the acoustic effect she experiences is reproduced visually by overlaying different shots to imitate the layering of sound.

III.5. Set, Costume, and Makeup Design

The arts of makeup, costume and set design entered film from a primarily theatrical background and underwent a significant process of transformation and adaptation in alignment with the development of the film medium and its demands. The possibilities offered by an expanding selection of cinematic techniques, the chance to reveal parts of an image or space selectively through framing, the proximity afforded by the close-up and the flexibility offered by the ability to edit images and alter time all helped distance early film from the conventions and restrictions of the theatre. In some respects, the marks of this intermedial transition became visible almost at once, while in others strong ties to theatrical traditions were maintained for a long time.

Makeup designers rapidly began to adapt to the unforgiving scrutiny of the close-up, the harshness of cinematic lighting, and the tonal restrictions of black-and-white film. For acutely visually-defined characters like Gothic literary monsters, these initial setbacks became advantages in disguise. Closer views of an actor's face allowed for the creation of more detailed and intricate makeup concepts and prosthetics, more naturalistic representations of deformity and disfigurement, and more scope for encoding character traits into the smallest details of design. The

magnitude and direction of these changes is imparted with special force by the contrasts seen between multiple adaptations of the same monster narrative at different points throughout the duration of the Silent Era. One of the earliest known *Jekyll and Hyde* adaptations, Turner/Bosworth (1908), likely did not update the makeup style described in the Fish and Forepaugh play. The 1912 Henderson/Cruze version however, already begins to stray from its theatrical roots. The fang-like false teeth, heavy, painted shadows, artificial eyebrows and tousled wig worn by Cruze's Hyde are clearly designed to register from a distance, but Cruze still acknowledges the presence of the camera as he lumbers towards it with a malicious grin giving himself a close-up.



Figure 32: James Cruze as Hyde in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Thanhouser Film Corporation 1912), directed by Lucius Henderson. Screen grab taken by author.

Variations of the Fish and Forepaugh model would continue to be a staple of Hyde representations throughout the Silent Era, gradually gaining in detail and

subtlety and demonstrating a growing awareness of the differences between stage and screen. The 1920 Robertson/Barrymore version pulls back the size of the false teeth and minimises the volume of the wig to free the face for a more understated performance style. Faintly traced lines, wrinkles and veins age Barrymore's face, making his Hyde appear haggard and sickly - an embodiment of the disease slowly eating away at Jekyll's sanity.



Figure 33: Publicity stills of John Barrymore as Jekyll and Hyde in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Robertson, 1920),

Deviating from the established Silent Era Hyde look, Albert Basserman in *Der Andere* (1913), and Alwin Neuss, (who took on the double role twice in 1910 and 1914), present even more connotatively refined designs. Basserman's Other uses facial contortions alone to demonstrate the shift in identity, while the earlier Alwin Neuss film, *Den Skaebnesvangre Opfindelse* (1910), features a rare simian Hyde

akin to the type later made famous by Frederic March (Mamouliau 1931).

Completing the fusion between cinematic technique and makeup design, March's Hyde makeup required a multi-layered system of coloured filters to reveal it step-by-step before the camera.¹⁵²



Figure 34: Alwin Neuß as Hyde in *Ein Seltsamer Fall* (Vitascope GmbH 1914), directed by Max Mack. Lost film. Copy of publicity still acquired by author from the Deutsches Kinemathek.

The symbolic value of a certain approach to makeup design was dictated not only by the technical capabilities and limitations of cinema but also by more abstract philosophical discourses on the medium. The perceived naturalism of film alongside its potential for exhibiting detailed craftsmanship had a strong influence on the design of physically anomalous monster figures like Hyde, and to a greater extent, *Notre Dame de Paris*'s Quasimodo and *Phantom of the Opera*'s Erik. The 1911

¹⁵² Bloom 68.

Capellani/Krauss adaptation of *Notre Dame* uses a bold, mask-like design for Quasimodo, in line with its flat, theatrical backdrops and broad gestural styles. The 1923 Worsley version with Lon Chaney complements its sophisticated camera work and lighting schemes with scrupulously detailed, flexible prosthetics that reference recognisable medical conditions. Chaney's 1925 Erik is also more than a rigid mask. In both films, the makeup is the centrepiece of his performance. He relies both on its overall shock value when seen in close proximity and on its potential to support fine shifts in facial expression that would have been indiscernible on stage.

Some filmmakers gravitated towards the antithesis of this approach, celebrating the ability of film to create a self-enclosed artificial world rather than a semblance of "realism". Films like *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* merged actors' faces, costumes, shadows, and sets to an extent unachievable in other media. Murnau's Expressionistic *Nosferatu* builds a dramatic visual symphony between the angular shapes of Orlock (Max Schrek)'s makeup, the composition of each frame, and the sets and props that surround him. The creation of an obvious visual bond between the actors and the fabric of the film had special narrative value to the two 1928 *Ushers*, with the Watson/Webber version going furthest in its stylistic unification. Melville Webber's designs literally draw a parallel between the "makeup" or decorative patterning on the sets representing the House and the faces of the actors. All three main characters (Roderick, Madeline and the visitor) are painted in a graphic, two-dimensional manner, with the most extreme effect reserved for the visitor (played by Webber himself). Although in Poe's story he is meant to be an outsider, Webber turns him into a human embodiment of the House. Painted lines break up his face into geometric shapes that harmonise with the lines of his top hat and the stiff collar

of his coat. His entrance into the House is represented by an image of his face superimposed over the skewed lines and shapes adorning the door, creating the impression that he has either imbibed the House's essence or has been emanated by its walls.



Figure 35: Herbert Stern's makeup as Roderick Usher (top) and Melville Webber's makeup as the visitor (bottom) in *The Fall of the House of Usher* (Watson and Webber, 1928). Screen grabs taken by author.



Epstein's approach to the material, while much less obviously stylised is no less predicated on his theories of filmmaking. Using virtually invisible makeup, Epstein allows nothing to interfere with the purity of his searching, lingering slow motion close-ups, picking up the most microscopic movements of the facial muscles.



Figure 36: Subtle makeup design in Jean Epstein's *La Chute de la Maison Usher* (1928). Jean Debucourt as Roderick Usher (top) and Charles Lamy as the visitor (bottom). Screen grabs taken by author.



Possibly the most persistent theatrical influence in silent Gothic literary adaptations is felt in the area of costume design. Most of the original literary sources discussed here are set in a historical period not contemporary to the Silent Era and sometimes not contemporary to the time the novel itself was written. Even in cases where an earlier stage adaptation had not been attempted, early film adaptations often looked to theatrical traditions for historical costumes. Borrowing ideas from the opera and ballet, from Shakespearean productions and other historically-set plays, filmmakers freely recycled recognisable character types (the virtuous maiden, the seductress, the evil monk, the suave aristocrat, the malicious schemer), even referencing distinctive traits of frequently portrayed theatrical/historical characters. Thus the two contrasting women competing for Gwynplaine's soul in Leni/Veidt's *The Man Who Laughs* do not stray far from the famous ballet Swan Lake - the brazen, seductive Black Swan Josiana in her black lace negligée and the soft, lyrical White Swan Dea with her fluffy blond hair and white gowns. The treacherous Jehan in Worsley/Chaney's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1923) is given a wig and costume taken straight from Richard III's portrait in the National Portrait Gallery in London, and John Barrymore's Jekyll (*Jekyll and Hyde*, 1920) looks like a dashing fop from an Oscar Wilde play (appropriate given the film's many *Dorian Gray* references).

On a broader scale, filmmakers replicated conventionalised sign systems for representing certain cultural/historical periods (Medieval or 18th-century Europe, Victorian London, etc.), often allowing for creative anachronisms in the process as stage productions have done for centuries. Both the Herzka/Höbling (1921) and Leni/Veidt (1928) film versions of *The Man Who Laughs* draw their contrasts

between commoners and aristocracy by juxtaposing loose garments of undyed wool and cotton with luxurious brocades, satins, velvets, and long, curly wigs. Decorative details such as ornate shoe buckles and jewellery are additionally exaggerated in scale as they would have been on stage where they had to be seen from a distance.



Figure 37: Approaches to historical costume design. Top: *Das Grinsende Gesicht* (Herzka, 1921). Publicity still. Copy obtained by author from the Deutsches Kinemathek, Berlin.) Bottom: *The Man Who Laughs* (Leni, 1929). Film frame.



Silent *Hunchback* adaptations push their exaggerations further, melting their medieval setting into an indiscriminate patchwork of historical references. The 1911 Capellani/Krauss version uses costumes that would not have been out of place in a Shakespearean production, while the 1923 Worsley/Chaney film brings together women in conical, veiled headdresses, a Frollo who looks like a Franciscan monk (complete with tonsure and rope belt) rather than an Archdeacon, and a Phoebus who combines the historically inaccurate armour of a fantasy knight with the long wavy hair and pointed beard of a 17th century musketeer. In general, costume design did not undergo as much of a cinema-specific evolution in silent literary monster films as makeup. Costumes were not afforded as many close-ups as faces and props and while less immediately apparent changes were doubtless taking place, costume design had not yet developed a distinct “voice” in the language of cinema.

In set design as in makeup design, meaningful details gained in importance over broad strokes and long-distance visibility in translation to film. Props in particular began to acquire a greater importance and visibility than they had on stage and became an increasingly essential component of cinematic language. Enlarged to fill the screen, explored by the eye of the camera and made precious by tailored lighting schemes, even the smallest objects could “speak” volumes in silent cinema, operating as narrative devices and icons filled with layers of meaning. In the context of Gothic literature and for the monster figure in particular, environments and the objects that inhabit them already bear a profound symbolic weight in the original sources. It was only natural for this element to be translated into the earliest film adaptations. Even some of the earliest films in this corpus, such as Edison’s 1910 *Frankenstein* or Henderson/Cruze’s 1912 *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, devote special

attention to the selection and placement of props although they do not employ close-ups. The casually placed skeleton and alchemist's cauldron in *Frankenstein's* study hint at the occult nature of his actions and foreshadow their disastrous consequences. Jekyll engages with the myriad bottles and test tubes on his shelves as he creates his transformative potion and Hyde later comes to attack them - a self-destructive gesture that demonstrates Jekyll/Hyde's loss of control. Each subsequent *Jekyll and Hyde* film develops its own set of props for the laboratory, in each case using their style and distribution to establish Jekyll's personality, social standing, relationship with science, and self-perception.

Orlacs Hände (Wiene 1924) underlines its theme of hands by encoding meaning in the objects the hands of various characters interact with: Orlac's piano, the delicate flowers held by his wife, the heavy door knocker and severe monolithic blocks in the house of Orlac's father, the slim, glossy dagger of the supposed murderer Vasseur, which is passed onto Orlac and later used to frame him for murder. These objects advance the story and tell us far more about the characters they accompany than the written intertitles do. Wiene deliberately jettisons the cluttered interiors and grandiloquent descriptions of Renard's novel defining each space with a single piece of furniture or design detail, such as the oversized vase in the Orlacs' lobby, the carved wooden throne occupied by Orlac's father, or the endless black sofa that crouches against the wall of Orlac's piano room as though preparing to pounce.

The two preserved silent adaptations of *The Man Who Laughs* use props and textures to describe the radically different lifestyles and identities offered to Gwynplaine. The earlier Herzka/Höbling version does this by almost withholding

props in the Palace and Parliament scenes, showing them as vast, impersonal spaces inhabited by magnificent but soulless people. Ursus's poor but cosy wagon on the other hand, overflows with specific and thoughtful details - peeling paint on the walls, a little wooden trestle table, a basket-woven flask hanging on the wall, a small window with a grid of flat metal circles, a single candlestick of dark metal twisted into a spiral, and some items of clothing hanging on pegs on the walls. This is the home of Gwynplaine's childhood and every detail is familiar to him. The Leni/Veidt version (1928) does the opposite, flooding the realm of the upper classes with opulent glamour while keeping Ursus's abode restrained and simple. Carlos Clarens describes the film as "smothered in décor and chiaroscuro" evoking both "splendour" and "horror."¹⁵³ King James's bedroom is lined with statues that look like stone tomb effigies and happen to open onto hidden passages. Josiana's rooms are bedecked with gilded columns, faux-classical sculpture, and Baroque vases overflowing with carved foliage and supported by cherubs. Her floor is strewn with furs, and she cavorts half-naked in front of an oval mirror in a heavily decorated frame. Everything is hard and sparkling except her own voluptuous flesh, her pet monkey, and the luxurious furs. Whereas in Herzka/Höbling, detailed props symbolise homeliness, here they represent excess and decadence. In all of the above cases, props define the sets they occupy, working with lighting, composition and camera angles to silently reveal the hidden urges, beliefs, and aspirations of their owners.

¹⁵³ Clarens 12.

III.6. Gestural Language

Gestural language is another good example of an area of film language whose traditions began to develop organically in silent film and became such an important part of the Gothic literary monster's film representation that they followed him into his sound incarnations as well. The relationship between the cinematic monster and verbal vs gestural communication has always been a complex one. On stage the dialogues, monologues, and 3rd- and 1st-person narrative voices that populate Gothic literary works could be, at least partially, verbalised by the actors. In silent film, this was not possible, and explanatory intertitles could go only a limited way towards expressing the monster's complex psychology. Important as gestural language was to the theatre, it became an essential communicative tool in Silent Era film.

In the 1908 *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Hobart Bosworth still endeavoured to preserve "each detail of pose, gesture and expression" as presented in the play from which it was drawn but later *Jekyll and Hyde* films released within the next few years show an increasing awareness of cinematic space and the eye of the camera.¹⁵⁴ Just as close-ups demanded more refined makeup, they allowed for more subtle facial expressions and smaller, more intimate gestures. A passing grimace or a tremor in the fingers could foreshadow Jekyll's approaching transformation into Hyde, a slight turn of the head could suggest Roderick Usher's hypersensitivity to the movements of his House, and a half-concealed hand gesture could lend poignancy to Gwynplaine's impenetrable smile. Max Schrek's gliding, Expressionistic, furtive movements in *Nosferatu* complement his animalistic makeup and the film's bold compositions, but they also wordlessly reveal the vampire's

¹⁵⁴ "Rev. of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, dir. Otis Turner," *Moving Picture World* 7 Mar. 1908.

isolation, his ferocious hunger, and his suppressed yearning - contentious feelings that are described in lengthy monologues in the novel. Subtle gestures, casually captured by the eye of the camera, play the role of the carefully-placed adjective, attempting to preserve the psychological depth and subtlety of the literary sources.



Figure 38: Expressive gestural language in *La Chute de la Maison Usher* (Epstein, 1928). Jean Debucourt as Roderick and Charles Lamy as the visitor. Screen grab taken by author.

Films that constructed innovative effects sequences and experimented with cinematic illusionism placed their own special demands on actors and their bodies. The first views of Erik in Julian/Chaney's *Phantom of the Opera* (1925) reveal him only as a shadow on the wall, turning Chaney into a living shadow puppet whose gestures must register clearly in two-dimensions. Watson/Webber's effects-heavy *Usher* (1928) dictated an extremely precise choreography for its actors, as they were often shot separately with no knowledge of the finished scene, their bodies spliced

together with shots of the set and other actors, then fed through a system of prisms and mirrors.

In a 1929 article, critic Adolph Glassgold complained about the rising popularity of “the talkie”, attributing it to the shallow curiosity and “susceptibility of the average mind.” He insisted that the ability to incorporate speech into film has encouraged most professional filmmakers to relinquish “all contact with intrinsically cinematic forms” leaving it up to directors from “foreign lands” and amateur visionaries to save the film medium from complete disintegration.¹⁵⁵ In the eyes of Glassgold and many others, the film medium didn’t actually *need* sound to convey its message. Sound was merely a shallow distraction, a deviation that damaged cinema’s artistic integrity. This view has perhaps indirectly but curiously informed the history of the Gothic literary monster on film. Even monsters who are closely tied to music (like Erik, the Phantom of the Opera) or expository dialogue (like Frankenstein’s Creature) found new forms of expression in silent film that followed them into the sound era. Lon Chaney’s dramatic gestural style as Erik in 1925 (derided as “outrageous” and “uncharacteristically operatic” by horror film historian Jonathan Rigby), is actually a fitting counterpart to the story’s operatic setting and themes and the lavish scale of the film.¹⁵⁶ Chaney’s gestural interpretation of the character can be viewed as an attempt at giving a palpable dimension to the music that fills the lives of the characters but remains unheard by the audience. His sweeping, dance-like movements are an embodiment of the ethereal, hypnotic voice described in the novel, and set him apart as a creature belonging to a different world (the world of music) rather than the material and social realm occupied by the other characters.

¹⁵⁵ C. Adolph Glassgold, “The Films: Amateur or Professional?,” *The Arts* Jan. 1929: 56–59.

¹⁵⁶ Rigby, *American Gothic* 45-7.



Figure 39: Lon Chaney's gestural style as Erik in *The Phantom of the Opera* (Julian, 1925). Mary Philbin as Christine. Publicity still.

The first film adaptations of *Frankenstein* necessarily lose the Creature's verbose self-analysis as presented in the novel, but they do not portray the "mute or inarticulate beast[s]" described by David Pinching in an Afterword to Shelley's novel.¹⁵⁷ Although no dialogue cards are attributed to Charles Stanton Ogle's Creature in Edison's *Frankenstein* (1910), there are distinct indications that he *is* fully verbal and he is seen gesturing and moving his lips before entering into a physical confrontation with Frankenstein. Reviews for the later *Frankenstein* adaptation *Life Without Soul* (1915), praise Percy Darrel Standing for his nuanced

¹⁵⁷ David Pinching, "Afterword," *Frankenstein, or, The Modern Prometheus* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2004) 269–278. 269

and sympathetic portrayal of the Creature rather than his intimidating appearance.¹⁵⁸

In different ways, both films prioritise the Creature's ability to express himself and his potential for evoking a sympathetic response.

Pinching's generalisation misses the irony of the fact that it is the first *sound* adaptation of *Frankenstein* - the 1931 James Whale film with Boris Karloff - that renders the Creature mute. Transitioning rapidly into sound with *Frankenstein* (Universal), *Dracula* (Universal), and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Paramount) all released in 1931, the Gothic literary monster did not part with his gestural specificity, or its importance in revealing his hidden complexity. Monster films of the 1930s demonstrate a marked trend towards the use of anomalous or noticeably mannered physicality to differentiate the monster from the other, "normal" characters. Boris Karloff's iconic, influential, and non-verbal performance as Frankenstein's Creature expresses the psychological and emotional effects of his unnatural inception through posture and movement style rather than spoken words. Karloff's appearance the following year in the title role in *The Mummy* (directed by Karl Freund) includes far more dialogue, although his speech patterns and voice contribute less to the overall impression of the character than his frightening makeup and memorable gestural style. Conversely, Tod Browning's 1931 *Dracula* draws on Bela Lugosi's distinctive voice and accent to build its interpretation of the vampiric count. The element of speech does become an essential component there, but it is bolstered throughout the film by Lugosi's intent stare and the predatory clawing motions of his fingers.

¹⁵⁸ Edward Weitzel, "Rev. of Life Without Soul, dir. Joseph W. Smiley," *Moving Picture World* 4 Dec. 1915.

Made over a decade after this initial wave of early sound monster films, the 1943 Lubin/Rains *Phantom of the Opera* still bears the marks of its transitional position and the tension between verbal and gestural expression in literary monster films. A close look at the diverse acting styles it incorporates shows a growing rift between performance techniques originating in the Silent Era and an emerging dependence on sound and dialogue in the new generation of performers. Many of the younger actors, such as Susanna Foster and Nelson Eddy, represent the first generation of adult actors to build their careers exclusively in sound films and musicals. Claude Rains (as the Phantom), born in the 1880s, belongs to the same generation as major stars of silent cinema such as John Barrymore and Conrad Veidt. Tense or romantic scenes between Christine and her two young suitors bear a distinctly inert nature. The characters sit or stand in static poses engaging in wordy dialogues or expressing their feelings through song. Rains's role does include some dialogue, but his lines are far less numerous and less loaded with inherent meaning than those of the younger characters. His most important and emotional scenes are generally played in complete silence, relying on facial expressions and gestural style. The development of the character and his rapid descent into insanity are revealed through transformations in his body language, posture and gait.

By the time Gothic literary monsters gained a voice on film, the specificity of silent film had in many ways embedded itself into their cultural iconography. The tools and techniques discussed throughout this chapter, whether borrowed from other sources and adapted to the needs of silent film, or developed for a specific film or monster figure, all left their mark on future cinematic translations of the literary

sources that inspired them. Some methods were tailored specifically to the requirements and limitations of the silent film literary monster and were replaced gradually by the products of new sound, colour, and digital effects technologies. Alongside other technical advances, sound and dialogue did eventually come to play their parts in sound-era monster films. Nevertheless, the visual and physical presentations of such abidingly popular literary monster characters as Jekyll/Hyde, Frankenstein's Creature, Dracula, Quasimodo, and Erik the Phantom of the Opera, owe a great debt to their Silent Era roots - their very first translations from literature to film.

Chapter IV - The Duality of the Silent Film Monster

IV.1. Major Characteristics of the Silent Film Monster and the Challenge of Classification

This section is meant as a general introduction to Chapters Four-Eight, which present the need for a flexible, multi-layered system of classification for the material analysed in this thesis. The proposed classification reflects the complexity and depth of the films under discussion and highlights the uniqueness of the silent film monster. Conceived in Gothic literature then embodied, reinvented, and reinterpreted in silent film, the monster characters presented in the previous chapter pose a challenge in terms of classification. Any taxonomy stemming from a single disciplinary precept cannot fully encompass their multiple facets and label all the patterns, similarities, and contrasts that define them. As the monsters discussed in this research trace their roots to literary sources it is useful to take a look at some of the relevant theories of monstrosity in literature and analyse their relevance to the cinematic monster alongside social, philosophical, psychological and other frameworks. This will allow for a more nuanced understanding of what silent cinema as a medium and as an art added to the representation of monstrosity and thus further set the stage for my detailed film analysis.

Judith Halberstam's *Skin Shows : Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* and Joseph Andriano's *Immortal Monster: The Mythological Evolution of the Fantastic Beast in Modern Fiction and Film* both approach the monster figure as an embodiment of the phobias and anxieties of a given society and time period. Halberstam describes the monstrous body as a "machine" for absorbing and

reflecting the abstract fears of the reader or viewer in a concentrated form, and Andriano applies this model specifically to fears of evolution/devolution and the monster as transgressor of boundaries between the civilised Self and the atavistic Other.¹⁵⁹

Peter L. Hays bases his study of physical aberration and its symbolic meanings on literary and mythological material. In *The Limping Hero: Grotesques in Literature*, he places fictional representations of physical disability and lameness into a broader context of social and emotional limitation and defines the motif of lameness as emblematic of a character's other internal or invisible deficiencies. He divides his corpus of "limpers" into Fertility Figures, who achieve a form of rebirth after passing through a symbolic death and are connected to ancient fertility gods, Sterility Figures (divided into Victims and Victimisers), whose personal lameness is related to symbolic castration, and Limited Man – more realistically grounded characters whose lameness epitomises their restricted and moribund environment.¹⁶⁰

Expanding the concept of monstrosity beyond the boundaries of fiction into sociocultural and legal contexts, Alexa Wright's *Monstrosity: the Human Monster in Visual Culture* explores the significance of "human monsters" throughout Western history. She provides examples and case studies on interpretations of and responses to physical aberrations, serial killers, sexual deviants, and other abnormal individuals. She posits that the monster is a social and cultural construct intended to establish "normality" and keep perceived monstrosity at a distance.¹⁶¹ In his series of lectures on the "Abnormal," philosopher and social theorist Michel Foucault draws

¹⁵⁹ Halberstam 21; Joseph Andriano, *Immortal Monster: The Mythological Evolution of the Fantastic Beast in Modern Fiction and Film* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1999).

¹⁶⁰ Hays 7.

¹⁶¹ Alexa Wright, *Monstrosity: the Human Monster in Visual Culture* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013).

on 19th century concepts of abnormality to define three representative “figures”: The Human Monster, The Individual to be Corrected, and the Onanist. His category of the “Human Monster” relates to Wright’s study, placing the monster in a legal context as a lawless figure who combines “the impossible and the forbidden,” provoking violent suppression or medical care. The Individual to be Corrected originates from a family/community context and resists attempts at traditional correction and training, deviating from the conventions of his/her environment. The Onanist represents sexual abnormality and irregularities in the relationship with one’s parents and one’s own body.¹⁶²

Alongside these late 20th century ideas and theories, an examination of theories contemporary to the writing of the original source novels can shed additional light on attitudes towards monstrosity and physical abnormality that may have filtered down to their later cinematic counterparts. The theories of 19th century Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso propose a direct relationship between physical and psychological abnormality and criminal potential. Lombroso’s study of the “criminal type” and the “man of genius” places heavy emphasis on the link between spiritual evil and its physical manifestations. He provides meticulous lists of physical anomalies in the skeleton, facial features, and even patterns of hair growth that indicate moral depravity and reveal an individual’s “savage” tendencies.¹⁶³ Lombroso’s ideas had a pronounced influence on late 19th and early 20th century depictions of criminality, and traces of this can be identified in the design of silent film monsters. The depiction of abnormal or disabled characters as evil is still omnipresent in popular

¹⁶² Michel Foucault, *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France 1974-1975* (London: Verso, 2003).

¹⁶³ Lombroso *Criminal and Genius*

culture, a problem that has been explored in various theories of the “Supercrip”, “Evil Crip”, and “Evil Avenger.”¹⁶⁴

Various modes of “spectacularisation” and categorisation of the abnormal body have been analysed at length by theorists of “freakery” and the freak show, such as Robert Bogdan and Rosemarie Garland-Thompson. Garland-Thompson and Bogdan analyse the turn-of-the-century freak show as a cultural phenomenon, relating it to culturally encoded perceptions of Otherness, disability and foreignness. Bogdan describes the main patterns of categorisation implemented in the presentation of “freaks,” labelling them the “Exotic Mode” and the “Aggrandised Mode.”¹⁶⁵ As such practices are contemporaneous and closely related to Silent Era cinema, it is useful to examine how their patterns reflect in depictions of cinematic monsters.

Approaching the question of monstrosity from a philosophical perspective, Noel Carroll incorporates a discussion of effective strategies for constructing monsters across the arts and media into his *Philosophy of Horror*. He insists that a “Horrific Monster” inspires fear and revulsion because he is perceived as “impure” or a “violation of nature.” He elaborates on methods of evoking this sense of impurity by fusing contradictory elements within a single being, creating hybridised categories such as “inside/outside, living/dead, insect/human, flesh/machine.”¹⁶⁶ Discussing the techniques of the “terror film,” Siegbert Salomon Prawer similarly defines the

¹⁶⁴ For more on representations of disability in the media, see Marilyn Dahl, “The Role of the Media in Promoting Images of Disability- Disability as Metaphor: The Evil Crip,” *Canadian Journal of Communication* 1 Jan. 1993; Alison Hartnett, “Escaping the ‘Evil Avenger’ and the ‘Supercrip’: Images of Disability in Popular Television,” *Irish Communications Review* 2000: 21–29; Martin F. Norden, “The ‘Uncanny’ Relationship of Disability and Evil,” *The Changing Face of Evil in Film and Television*, ed. Martin F. Norden (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007) 125–144.

¹⁶⁵ See Robert Bogdan, *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); Robert Bogdan, “The Social Construction of Freaks,” *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, ed. Rosemarie Garland-Thompson (New York: New York UP, 1996) 23–37; and Rosemarie Garland-Thompson, *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body* (New York: New York UP, 1996).

¹⁶⁶ Carroll, *Philosophy of Horror* 42–3.

varying roles of the monster in terms of binary oppositions, but his categorisations are phrased in broader terms such as “psychological monster” – “physiological monster”, “acting monster” – “suffering monster.”¹⁶⁷

In *Movie Monsters*, a catalogue of monster figures throughout the history of cinema, Denis Gifford delineates twelve categories including Monster, Golem, Mummy, Zombie, Vampire, Werewolf, Cat, Ape, Beast, Brute, Mutant, and Mask. The labels used are at times arbitrary and the characters described can often be placed in more than one category, which makes their ultimate categorisation highly subjective and controversial. For instance, he qualifies all cinematic Hydes (from *Jekyll and Hyde* adaptations) as “The Brute,” which he defines as “the monster within.”¹⁶⁸ Silent film representations of Hyde however, can also fit some of the criteria for his “Mutant,” “Beast,” and “Monster” categories, and to a certain extent even “Mask.” Attempting a similarly specific system of classification, Abigail Burnham Bloom engages with the issue of literary adaptation in film in *The Literary Monster on Film: Five Nineteenth Century British Novels and Their Cinematic Adaptations*. However, most of her film examples are drawn from the Sound Era, and she provides only one monster for each of her five categories including: Creator and Monster (*Frankenstein*), The Duality of Good and Evil (*Jekyll and Hyde*), Beauty and Eternal Life (H. Rider Haggard’s *She*), Man and Animal (H. G. Wells’s *The Island of Dr. Moreau*), and Vampire and Victim (*Dracula*). Bloom bases her categories on the original novel first, and then ties in film adaptations from several different eras.¹⁶⁹ This approach can be problematic as it places the films in subordination to the novels, not allowing for the profound alterations in meaning and

¹⁶⁷ Praver, *Caligari’s Children* 49.

¹⁶⁸ Denis Gifford, *Movie Monsters* (London: Studio Vista Books, 1969) 118.

¹⁶⁹ Bloom.

representation that can occur in the transfer from one medium to another. The bestial cinematic Hyde for instance, fits just as well within the group “Man and Animal” as “The Duality of Good and Evil,” while for the literary Hyde the former dichotomy is much less pronounced.

The theories outlined above form only a small representative sample of the many that have been developed to better categorise and theorise monstrosity in literature, art, and nature. The monster has existed in these realms for centuries. The emergence of the film medium, however, gave the monster a new outlet for expression that both merged and transcended previously available methods of representation. These new creations were not literary monsters, constructed of written words and the imagination of the reader, or painted or sculpted monsters made of stone or brush strokes and frozen in a single moment. They were not stage monsters either, who can talk and verbalise their inner thoughts, but are deprived of the intimacy of the cinematic close-up and the suggestive power of editing and cinematography.

The silent film monster introduced a multitude of new elements to the inter-medial discourse on the nature and meaning of monstrosity. A new medium with new expressive tools at its disposal creating a new language, silent film fashioned a new kind of monster. While based on literary sources, they are not moving illustrations. They are reinvented characters born of the fusion between centuries of tradition and an emerging modern, mechanical medium. The silent film monster borrowed extensively from established art forms, infusing a literary element into the construction of narrative and character development, referencing the visual arts in the fabrication of his physicality, his makeup, and perceptions of deformity and morality, and demonstrating theatrical influences in performance style, choreography, costume

and set design, and even casting decisions. Due to his – or its - extremely hybrid nature, the cinematic monster figure demands a categorisation as multifarious as he is, one which goes beyond concepts and categories developed in the context of non-cinematic philosophical, aesthetic, or literary theories.

Since the silent films discussed represented the first time that these iconic literary monsters were embodied on film, this process entailed a great deal of experimentation. Unlike their later counterparts, the earliest cinematic monsters were free of the definite generic boundaries of horror cinema (for instance), giving them room to incorporate unexpected elements and twists. They cannot be forced into genres that formed in the sound era because they were created by a medium still in the process of formation, building its place in the cultural landscape and developing its expressive tools and conventions. In many ways these films are akin to the chemical laboratories they so often depicted, mixing elements and ideas from a vast array of sources and transforming them into something new.

The Silent Era drew to a close and sound films emerged, recurring trends and patterns solidified, forming into clichés and stereotypes. Some features remained and evolved but are now usually isolated by generic divisions finding a home in Horror, Psychological Thrillers, Fantasy, Comedy and even Romance. Others did not develop far beyond their beginnings in silent film remaining unique to their period in the history of cinema. Due to the multifarious nature of the silent film literary monster, I have refrained from attempts at rigid categorisation. Instead, I have compiled a list of distinctive and significant features appearing recurrently in multiple monsters. None of these features cover the depth of any single monster so many are analysed under different angles in the context of more than one feature. All

of the characteristics discussed in the following chapters are also founded in broader philosophical contexts such as the Grotesque, the Sublime and the Uncanny.

In the following chapters, I will analyse the eight monsters that form the core of this research under the following headings: duality (the subject of this chapter); types of monstrous deformity, their mechanics and symbolism (Chapter Five); the monster and his architectural environment (Chapter Six); monstrous hybridity and the fear of science (Chapter Seven); and the process of “de-monstrifying” the monster figure in silent film (Chapter Eight). Multiple monster figures will be looked at in each chapter and intersections between themes will be acknowledged. The patterns and angles chosen for these chapters are based specifically on my analysis of Silent Era literary monster films and their patterns, conventions, techniques, and adaptive practices. The chosen approach is intended to provide the scope and flexibility necessary to more fully discuss these characters with all of their multilayered complexity, cultural versatility, and intermedial roots.

IV.2. Theories of the Double and the Other as Applicable to the Monster Figure

The internalisation of the Other as Double is a recurrent theme in Gothic literature and is vividly reflected in the translation to film, a medium that added new dimensions to the ongoing discourse on the symbolism and representation of duality in art and literature. Of all the features that make up the monster concept, the one that has resonated most emphatically in Gothic silent film is the theme of duality. It overlaps in some form with each of the key concepts discussed in the succeeding chapters. In the words of Otto Rank, “The uniqueness of cinematography in visibly

portraying psychological events calls our attention, with exaggerated clarity to the fact that the interesting and meaningful problems of man's relation to himself – and the fateful disturbance of this relation – finds here an imaginative representation.”¹⁷⁰

The filmic image is inherently dualistic and the concept of the double or doppelgänger is uniquely relevant to the film medium itself. Praver elucidates this idea, noting the way the filmic image creates doubles for the physical forms whose images it captures, and the way it invites audience members to project themselves onto those images.¹⁷¹ It is because of its qualities of replication, mirroring, fragmentation, as triggering imagination and the capacity for emotional identification on the part of viewers that the film medium is so particularly suited to exploring tales of autonomous portraits and mirror images, externalised doubles, and possessed body parts. The concept of recognising one's own “contradictory nature” in a reflection and the fear of misplacing one's identity forms the core of the creative and narrative decisions made by the silent Gothic film.¹⁷²

In their literary and cinematic forms, the monsters discussed in this thesis simultaneously illustrate the closely entwined theories of Duality and Otherness. Paul Coates describes the process of fiction writing itself as “a deliberately induced, almost mediumistic, dissociation of the spirit.” The author creates a fictional character as a Double, but on assuming independent life as a character, he/she merges into the Other. According to Coates, on entering a work of fiction (whether literary or cinematic) one transforms this Other back into a Double in a process of

¹⁷⁰ Otto Rank, *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study*, ed. Harry Tucker Jr. (University of North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012) 7.

¹⁷¹ Praver 55-7.

¹⁷² Huckvale 132; Eisner, *Haunted* 110.

identification and transformation in which the reader recognises elements of the self in the fictional Other.¹⁷³

By his own account, Otto Rank's influential study of duality, *Der Doppelgänger* (originally published as an essay in 1914) was inspired by watching the 1913 film *The Student of Prague*.¹⁷⁴ He provides an in-depth discussion of the film's exploration of this "old, traditional folk concept" comparing it with literary and mythological traditions. Referencing particularly Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Rank relates the image of the double to both the Greek myth of Narcissus and its implications of physical and spiritual death through self-obsession. Equating fear of the Double with fear of self-knowledge and the unconscious, Paul Coates also draws parallels with the use of duality in monster narratives such as *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. He presents a series of connections between doubles in 19th century European literature and various turn-of-the-century anxieties including the rapid development of technology, fear of foreignness and an increase in nationalism, suspension between languages and cultures, fears of women's liberation movements and the idea of a woman detaching herself from her husband and home, fear of the unconscious. Through the lens of these phobias, the double is interpreted as a harbinger of symbolic and/or physical death through transformation.¹⁷⁵ The symbolic conflation of duality and death occupies an important place in Rank's studies as well: "The impulse to rid oneself of the uncanny opponent in a violent manner belongs...to the essential features of the motif; and

¹⁷³ Paul Coates, *The Double and the Other Identity as Ideology in Post-Romantic Fiction* (London: Macmillan, 1988) 1-2.

¹⁷⁴ Rank xiii-xxi.

¹⁷⁵ Coates, *Double* 36-68.

when one yields to this impulse...it becomes clear that the life of the double is linked quite closely to that of the individual himself.”¹⁷⁶

Focusing on the concept of the naturally hybridised or devolved “beast monster”, Joseph Andriano argues that fictional duality is not only a reflection of social, scientific and psychological fears, but also an attempt to reconcile with them. Images of “fabulous beasts” are “reflections of our attempt to come to terms with human evolution, human animality” and “if one is open to the notion that evolution is what binds us all, that somewhere on the tree is a cross of intersection, a common ancestor, then the monster is welcome as part of the Self.”¹⁷⁷

Jerrold Hogle also identifies the monstrous double/other as a challenge to social and cultural norms as well as individual self-perception. He notes that *The Phantom of the Opera* (and its adaptations) display “the extremes and especially the ‘otherings’ that occur in...bourgeois self-fashioning” by challenging “deep-seated anomalies in Western European life-crossings of boundaries between class, racial, gender, and other distinctions”. The techniques of symbolic “othering” chosen by different *Phantom* adaptations and other monster narratives in general reflect the different threats posed to the “process of identity-construction, or different longings arising from it, at different points in Western cultural history.”¹⁷⁸

The conflicted fusion between the self and the other through the medium of the double draws attention to the impossibility of a unified self. Coates describes this as

a pseudo-unity, achieved through an exclusion and projection of otherness that is really a mystification of self-knowledge, a denial of the actual fragmentation of the self in the modern era. The self is not a permanent unity

¹⁷⁶ Rank 16.

¹⁷⁷ Andriano Preface and 164.

¹⁷⁸ Hogle Preface xii.

but an accidental combination of the genetic kaleidoscope; it lacks the transcendental features of necessity.¹⁷⁹

In *Alien Identities*, a collection of essays discusses identity and duality in the context of alien narratives, looking at the “alien in the sense of foreigner...humanity’s own alien identity.” This concept is connected directly to 19th century fears of foreign invasion as expressed in novels like *Dracula* and echoes the idea that a unified self is unattainable.

The only real alien is the one we carry around inside ourselves. That we humans tend to externalise, categorise and segregate the alien in an attempt to control it shows not only how insecure we are about ourselves, but also how impossible the notion of a single unified self really is. The changing meaning of aliens in contemporary culture, whether they are represented as benevolent or malevolent, reflects very different ideological agenda....Border crossing, between races, genders, nationalities... is a political gesture.... the most radically threatening moment is when the alien bursts out of ourselves.¹⁸⁰

Carl Jung’s theories on disunited identity locate the split deep within the human psyche as a struggle between the archetype of an ideal self and “the shadow” - the hidden side of a person’s nature, not yet acknowledged or assimilated. According to Jung, “The man without a shadow” is one who “imagines he actually is only what he cares to know about himself” and denies his inner duality.¹⁸¹

IV.3. Manifestations of Monstrous Duality in Silent Film

IV.3.1. Split Monster: The Monster’s Multiple “Creative” Bodies

The complex and multifaceted nature of duality as explored in literature and psychology inspired filmmakers to develop new cinematic, visual means for

¹⁷⁹ Coates, *Double* Preface xi-xii.

¹⁸⁰ Heidi Kaye and I.Q. Hunter, “Introduction,” *Alien Identities: Exploring Difference in Film and Fiction*, ed. Deborah Cartmell (London: Pluto Press, 1999) 7-8.

¹⁸¹ Jung 140.

conveying this profound concept in silent film. Filmmakers selected those manifestations of duality that could be more compellingly expressed in the language of film. One of the most frequently deployed modes of monstrous duality in silent cinema can be referred to as the “split monster”. This mode may have been inspired by such discourses on the grotesque as those later formulated by Mikhail Bakhtin in his theories of the “creative” grotesque body.

In his influential work *Rabelais and His World*, Bakhtin synthesises various theories of the grotesque including the idea of the “creative” grotesque body that generates doubles for itself. The monster’s duality is a very multi-faceted topic, and the grotesque helps to explore some of its elements in illuminating ways. The Bakhtinian creative grotesque is constantly doubled by itself and by the world around it. It “is never finished, never completed; it is continually built, created, and builds and creates another body.”¹⁸² The monster is also creative, also searching for ways to create a second body or merge with another being. Unfortunately for the monster, his creation is unnatural, unwholesome and exists to destroy and be destroyed. It lacks the healthy, vigorous continuity of the grotesque as envisioned by Bakhtin.

In silent film, the literary monster’s infectious nature is often expressed through the bodies of supporting characters who become a complex network of doubles for one another and for the monster’s diverging qualities. Carlos Clarens describes this as “the splitting of the hero into different entities (lover, antagonist, executioner).”¹⁸³ He is referring specifically to the 1925 version of *The Phantom of the Opera*, but the concept applies on a broader scale as well. In fact, it is a prevalent trend in monster narratives, particularly reinforced in the earliest film adaptations and can be traced

¹⁸² M. M Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1968) 317.

¹⁸³ Clarens 67.

back to their literary sources. In Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Captain Robert Walton jokingly references Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* at the start of the novel - an apt analogy for the relationships between the novel's characters. Although Walton imagines himself as the emaciated mariner with a haunting tale, the role devolves instead on the feverish and dying Victor, who relates his horrifying supernatural tale of guilt and atonement. All of the novel's central characters are entwined in multiple levels of doubling with Frankenstein at the centre. The adventurous and impulsive Captain Walton identifies with Frankenstein's ambitious thirst for knowledge and glory. He himself is engaged in a similar pursuit and makes it clear that he is prepared to sacrifice his own life and those of his crew to attain his goal. Sensing a kindred spirit, Frankenstein encourages Walton and becomes a spiritual mentor figure for him. On a more profound level, Frankenstein is doubled by the Creature he has created - an embodiment of his misguided aspirations and a reflection of the dark side of his nature. The Creature's journey from naive faith in humanity to bitter vengeance mirrors Frankenstein's downwards spiral from joy at scientific discovery to disillusionment with his results. Frankenstein's childhood sweetheart Elizabeth doubles the qualities he has lost, epitomising feminine virtue, purity, spirituality and innocence. As Frankenstein betrays the values of his family and childhood in his quest for knowledge and power, the Creature comes to destroy Elizabeth and the rest of Frankenstein's family, physically severing his last bonds with the life he could have had. Bound by shared guilt and bitterness Victor Frankenstein and his Monster both display the qualities of the remorseful Mariner and the vindictive spirit of the dead Albatross around his neck.

It is the core pairing of Victor and his Creature that comes to represent the novel's explorations of duality when transferred to early cinema. As noted earlier, both the 1910 Edison short and *Life Without Soul* remove Walton, although both keep the character of Victor's fiancée Elizabeth. She represents the film's romantic plotline while providing a positive foil to the Monster. In both films, Victor's feelings for Elizabeth ultimately counterbalance the darkness represented by the Monster, guaranteeing his salvation and providing the happy ending that the novel lacks. Elizabeth and the Monster both act as doubles for Victor, contrasting sharply with one another to represent his conflicted and tormented soul. Based on the preserved 1910 Edison short film and surviving synopses of *Life Without Soul* (1915), both films use the creation sequence and Frankenstein's impending wedding as key plot points. Anchoring the narrative, these two events help emphasise the Creature and Victor's fiancée Elizabeth as embodiments of the two halves of Victor Frankenstein's character.

Similarly, all of the central characters in Julian/Chaney's *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925) are counterparts and doubles, reinforcing facets of each other's personalities. Erik, Christine, Raoul, and the Persian are interchangeable doubles for one another and this is expressed through the evolution of their gestural exchanges throughout different situations in the film. The distinct movement styles of the characters separate them by delineating their specific roles within the narrative, but they are also connected by the ways in which they complement and contrast with one another. Clarens inadvertently draws attention to this simultaneous process of fusion and dissociation when he comments that

The character of the Phantom, combining the attributes of musical genius, master builder, and ruthless killer, is an early version of the sympathetic

monster-villain, while the leading man (Norman Kerry) is merely incidental to the drama, requiring a secondary hero, the Persian (Arthur Edmund Carewe), to match wits with the Phantom.”¹⁸⁴

This statement clearly underlines both the inherently multifarious nature of the monster (Erik) and the fragmentation of the hero into distinct individuals (Raoul and the Persian).

The representational model of the “split hero” as described by Clarens does apply to the “hero” in many cases, but it is even more strongly brought out in the monster. As a conflicted liminal being the monster is in a constant state of movement and transformation and his many features are echoed in a purer form by the characters who surround him. Clarens’s list of attributes (“lover, antagonist, executioner”) can just as easily be relocated to centre around Erik as around Raoul. In that sense, Raoul epitomises the health and comeliness that Erik has been denied and claims the affection of the woman Erik desires. Christine symbolises the innocence Erik has lost and the freedom to develop as a professional musician. By becoming her tutor, Erik transfers a part of his own stifled creativity to her and releases her to share it with the world. He lives vicariously through her artistic self-fulfilment. The Persian is conflated with Erik more obviously than any of the others from the start of the film. His costume gives him a very similar silhouette and he is often shown right after Erik’s shadowy appearances, paralleling his swift movements and grimly mysterious demeanour. A pall of secrecy and suspicion is cast over the Persian’s first appearances, to the extent of suggesting that he may actually be the Phantom himself. Unlike Erik however, he is fully acquitted of any potential accusations and reveals himself to be a policeman rather than a criminal. The

¹⁸⁴ Clarens 50.

revelation of his true identity still leaves a major question unexplained - why would an officer of the law appear almost indistinguishable from a criminally insane psychopath? What other, hidden similarities are disclosed by these surface parallels? The striking resemblance between their costumes and gestural styles raises corresponding doubts about the Persian's trustworthiness and Erik's irredeemability.

Exchanging gestures and taking on one another's poses and mannerisms the characters enhance and illustrate one another's qualities. When Christine rushes to Raoul's embrace, she underpins his role as protector. Raoul and Erik's assertive attitudes towards her illustrate her vulnerable status and her susceptibility to their attempts to influence or intimidate her. Erik's distorted face may be frightening in itself, but it is Christine's posture of horror and self-defence that completes its full impact. Her instant revulsion and alarm, even before he has actually threatened her, wordlessly demonstrate the motives behind his isolation and reflect his own self-loathing. His power over her is still asserted however, as he towers menacingly over her prone figure. Even when he collapses in hysterics he is still placed on a higher level of the set. Raoul's descent into the cellars in pursuit of Christine is accompanied by a notable gestural transfer that indicates the temporary cession of his authoritative position. The more pertinently qualified Persian becomes the *de facto* hero figure for much of the final sequence and is able to impact Raoul's posture just as Raoul and Erik had previously determined Christine's. Raoul obediently adopts the Persian's defensive stance and raises his hand to ward off a potential noose.

F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* combines gestural exchanges with subtle cinematographic and editing techniques to construct its split monster and express emotional connections between the characters. The framing and juxtaposition of

shots creates fleeting sightline matches between Ellen/Mina and Count Orlock even when they are miles apart as though they were conscious of one another's presence. Ian Roberts references such parallel shots as Ellen's seaside vigil during Orlock's approach by ship to develop the idea of a subliminal sexual bond between the repressed Ellen and the animalistically physical Orlock.¹⁸⁵ Murnau's suggestive cinematography and editing hints that Dracula/Orlock is not just an external evil, but a personification of Ellen's dark hidden desires and yearning for liberation – in other words, a classic Gothic doppelgänger. This interpretation may be corroborated by certain otherwise inexplicable gestures, such as Ellen's grasping of her breast as she feels the vampire's proximity, and the trajectory of his shadowy hand over her prone body as he comes to claim her. In this light, the final scene is a voluntary release from social repression at the cost of destruction, rather than a representation of saintly self-sacrifice.

In *Jekyll and Hyde* adaptations, actors are called on to create this type of gestural correlation/dichotomy within a single body. Depending on the actor and his specific strengths, various subtle performance elements are added to create this effect, often relying a great deal on the proximity and relative compositional flexibility of the camera. James Cruze for instance (Henderson/Cruze, 1912), uses his prominent eyes and hyperbolic facial expressions to convey some of the internal struggles of the character and emphasise the mental disparity between Jekyll and Hyde. He makes obvious concessions in his choreography to the rigidly immovable camera, shuffling closer after his first transformation to provide a good view of his new look.

¹⁸⁵ Roberts 48-9.

John Barrymore (Robertson/Barrymore, 1920) widens the visual contrast between Jekyll and Hyde by presenting a vain, dandyish Jekyll and exploiting his famously striking profile in numerous close-ups. Challenging the wholesome, conservative image of Jekyll seen in earlier adaptations, his performance suggests from the start that there may be darker potential beneath his respectable façade. As Hyde, he endows each gesture with a weighty aura of malice. Perversity and depravity emanate from the stealthy movements of his hands, and his darkly sly, knowing facial expression. He is not simply an uncontrollable release of animal barbarity, he is the dark side of indulgence and desire - the violent release of Jekyll's repression.

A similar approach is evident in Albert Basserman's performance in *Der Andere* (1913). Although *Der Andere* was not directly adapted from Jekyll and Hyde, the play it was based on was strongly inspired by the novella. Director Max Mack, who would create a direct Jekyll and Hyde adaptation the following year, evidently kept the parallel in mind. Basserman's Hallers, a lawyer rather than a doctor, is presented from the start as suave, confident, and extraverted, gliding through a drawing room in a tuxedo and flirting with the female guests. His Hyde-paralleling "Other", however bears little resemblance to the conventional silent film Hyde image. The transformation is almost entirely psychological rather than physical, provoked by a head injury and not a mysterious potion - it is a case of Split Personality Disorder. As Hallers assumes his alternate personality in a somnambulistic state, the wild, chaotic gestural style usually connected with Hyde is not employed here. The 'Other' is sluggish in his movements and reactions, with a shuffling walk and slightly slouched shoulders, as if he is walking in his sleep. This noticeable shift from Hallers's

usually fluid and energetic movements signals to the audience that he's becoming someone else.

IV.3.2. Romantic Monster: Duality Expressed Through Romantic Subplots

Bringing duality outside of the monster's body, some silent adaptations chose to visualise it in a form of metaphorical mirroring through the use of diverging romantic plotlines. In *The Double*, Paul Coates discusses doubling in the context of romantic love, where one unconsciously chooses a partner who echoes one's own physical or emotional attributes. When the similarity is too great, he notes, familiarity turns into the uncanny.¹⁸⁶ This type of romantic relationship is frequently used in silent monster films to highlight important dimensions of the monster's personality or symbolism.

Jekyll and Hyde films commonly introduce a romantic plotline. As Stevenson's original is almost entirely devoid of female characters and features no specific love interest either for Jekyll or Hyde, it is very likely that this element was inspired by the 1887 Sullivan and Mansfield stage production. Whether she is Jane, Grace, Maud, Alice, Agnes, Berenice, or Millicent the loving fiancée is almost always there, serving both as an externalisation of Jekyll's better nature and as his last (failed) chance at redemption. At the same time, she provides a strong motive for Jekyll/Hyde's suicide as he is frequently shown as responsible for her father's death and wishes to spare his beloved the consequences of his horrible secret. In some cases, Jekyll's duality is emphasised by the appearance of a sultry, amoral Eliza, Ivy,

¹⁸⁶ Coates, *Double* 1-6.

or Gina for Hyde's benefit. A flagrantly sexual embodiment of temptation belonging to the fringes of society just like Hyde, she indulges and encourages his visceral, lustful nature. Meanwhile, the modestly named society girl or vicar's daughter exudes innocence and purity, supporting Jekyll's respectable façade.

The core of Victor Hugo's *The Man Who Laughs* is a discussion of social injustice, political treachery, tyranny and the plight of the lower classes rather than lust or romantic love. Duality is an important recurring theme however, and it is the one that shows through most strongly in the 1928 Leni/Veidt adaptation, filtered through the angle of romantic/sexual relationships. As Josiana attempts to seduce Gwynplaine in the novel, she explains her odd attraction to him in the following terms: "You reveal my real nature. See how I resemble you. Look at me as if I were a mirror. Your face is my mind. I did not know I was so terrible. I am also, then, a monster."¹⁸⁷ In Leni/Veidt, this statement is reversed and projected onto the women who form Gwynplaine's two romantic plotlines. Their faces become reflections of different aspects of his mind - they "mirror" him and "reveal his true nature" as Dea and Josiana become his doppelgängers. Gwynplaine is emotionally torn between his comical physical appearance and the deep, internalized longings and regrets hidden by his superficial smile. The voluptuous, sensual Josiana embodies the temptations of lust and affluence; she is the epitome of the physical and the artificial – the beautiful counterpart to Gwynplaine's disfigured face. The humble and innocent Dea is an expression of the harsh but honest world of Gwynplaine's upbringing. Her blindness shuts her off from physical perception and she is able to identify Gwynplaine only by his spiritual qualities, seeing past the jarring barrier of his

¹⁸⁷ Victor Hugo, *The Man Who Laughs: A Romance of English History*, trans. Isabel Florence Hapgood (New York: Crowell, 1888) 450.

material form. As partners to the two opposing sides of Gwynplaine's being, Dea and Josiana are also contrasted in their gestural styles. Josiana is catlike, moving stealthily yet forcefully. In the seduction scene, she drapes her half-exposed body into deceptively soft curves, but her grip is powerful and relentless, as Gwynplaine struggles to escape her embrace. Dea always moves softly and hesitantly, partly because of her blindness, but also because of her ethereal form and character. Her gestures are gentle and soft and her movements never command, they only comfort and invite.

The film's triumphant ending is mainly the product of a reconciliation of Gwynplaine's two conflicting sides – a feat that is never achieved in the novel. Rejecting Josiana with her aggressively unilateral physicality, Gwynplaine casts himself at Dea's mercy, revealing to her his physical deformity in a desperate bid for her understanding. Her acceptance of his flawed physicality allows him to finally bring his two sides into harmony and achieve completion.

IV.3.3. The Monster's Body as Doppelgänger

In some cases, the monster's duality is expressed in the form of an extended body - an unnatural addition to his own body rather than an external host. In silent films, hands sometimes play an even more important role than faces. This is especially true in films that use heavy, hyper-stylised makeup like *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Robert Wiene, 1919) or those that involve extensive facial prosthetics such as adaptations of *Notre Dame de Paris*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *The Man Who Laughs*, *Frankenstein*, and *Dracula*. For such films, the hand may convey a more spontaneous and unfettered emotional expression than a face covered in make-up or a mask. The hand has long been seen as an effective emotive tool in painting,

sculpture, theatre, and film, due to its intricate structure and its expressive capabilities.

In films like *Orlacs Hände* (Wiene, 1924) or *Fall of the House of Usher* (Epstein, 1928) hands are represented as a source of mystic power or influence and act as doubles to their respective monster figures. Orlac for instance, is monstified through his hands. The hands are foreign to his body and represent the Other, coming from a supposedly criminal/socially deviant individual. The hands become a portal through which monstrosity enters Orlac's body and corrupts his mind. Hands and their symbolic and practical functions are a recurring theme throughout the film to an even greater extent than in the original novel. The film opens with a letter from Orlac to his wife in which his endearments are all framed in terms of embraces and caresses - interaction through the hands. They are instruments for creating music, vehicles for conveying love and tenderness, they are tainted by impure thoughts, they carry the memory of evil deeds and infect their new host like parasites. The hands become his doubles, at the same time an alien intrusion and an inextricable part of his own body. Traveling up his arms, their influence invades his body and possesses his soul. Splitting into two personalities, akin to Jekyll and Hyde or Dorian Gray and his portrait, Orlac allows his hands to indulge in urges that he never allowed himself. His timidity is challenged by the violence with which they handle a dagger and his faithfulness is brought into question when they caress the face of the Orlacs' pretty maid. As the hands become more assertive, their movements grow wilder as well. In one sequence they plunge him into a semi-somnambulistic state, leading him out of his bedroom and to the piano where he has hidden Vasseur's dagger. At one point, he moves straight into the camera with his hands reaching for the lens. There is more

than a little of *Caligari*'s Cesare to him, as he sidesteps with a panther-like stealth into the shadows, the knife held high on his tense, outstretched arm, and then proceeds to stab the air with increasing violence. Overwhelmed by fear of his hands, he attempts various attacks on them as though they are not a part of his body, thrusting them away on outstretched arms, menacing one hand with a knife held in the other, or setting them against one another grabbing and clenching them together. At his wife's entrance he conceals the knife and his hands behind his back, crouching as he furtively circles away from her. The whole sequence is a kind of prowling, ecstatic, demonic ballet. The hands transform the way his entire body moves. The issue of internal duality becomes even more potent when it is revealed that the hands are not actually inherently evil. Their influence is all in Orlac's own imagination, and their actions are an expression of his subconscious rather than possession from an external source. The readiness with which he plunges himself under their influence demonstrates a yearning for release of repressed urges and desires and suggests that the split is not in his body but in his mind.



Figure 40: Conrad Veidt and his hands in *Orlacs Hände* (Wiene, 1924). Publicity still.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁸ Reprinted in Eisner, *Haunted* 147.

In his 1928 *Fall of the House of Usher*, Jean Epstein uses numerous close-ups (usually in slow motion) to dissect the characters' gestures and expressions. While most of these close-ups are focused on the face, a significant number is devoted to the hands. Roderick's first appearance on screen, just under six minutes into the film, is an extreme closeup of his hands, revealed as he rotates slowly towards the camera. The lighting and framing, as well as the hands' languid, motionless posture, give them a sculptural look, as though they belong to a work of art rather than an animate being. His face is shown shortly afterwards, but he is initially introduced through his hands, which bear a multi-layered weight of meaning in the context of the film's symbolic and aesthetic framework.

They play a central role in a number of key scenes, and serve as one of the main vehicles for expressing Roderick's character and showing his modes of communication with the world around him. In the painting sequences, the hand operates as a destructive/vampiric force, supernaturally leeching the soul and energy of the living Madeline and transferring it into the painted image. The interplay of gestures in this scene emphasises the physicality of the exchange and portrays the hand as capable of both sophisticated artistic endeavour and physical brutality simultaneously.

The mystical powers of the hand are hinted at in other scenes as well, in which its gestures and qualities reveal internal emotional states, participate in the creation of atmosphere, impact the movements of the external world and serve creative and destructive functions. The hand's domination of organic matter is explored in

Roderick's destructive relationship with his wife, but this mode of representation also appears in a wider and more ambiguous capacity in a sequence featuring music rather than painting. Seemingly inspired by the agitated ambience of the House, Roderick wanders around the room strumming his guitar. As he plays, subtle, slow motion close-ups of his traveling hands break down the gesture into an intricate view of his smallest movements, the gradual folding and unfolding of his fingers and their slow, dreamy journey across the strings of the guitar. These images are intercut with shots of sparkling water, silhouetted trees and the slowly billowing curtains in the hallway. The undulating motion of the hands forms a figurative harmony with the ripples ruffling the smooth surface of the lake, the swaying branches of the trees and the mist wafting across the water. This deceptively simple, but in fact meticulously timed and structured sequence, lends a gravity and significance to the original gestures, almost as though Roderick's music and the creative power of his hands are somehow affecting these natural phenomena, or being influenced by them.

The hand's complex metaphoric and representational importance in Epstein's film extends beyond the spectrum of its interrelations with the external world, as it has a deep internal facet as well. On a smaller and more intimate scale, the hand's inner workings and conscious movements are used to illustrate psychological states and moods. Roderick's emotional turmoil after Madeline's death is conveyed in a sequence that combines extreme closeups of the interior of a working clock, snapping guitar strings, and Roderick's convulsively clenched hands to represent tension and mental unraveling. In an earlier scene, the Visitor, disturbed by his friend's flustered appearance, instinctively reaches across the table to feel his pulse, hinting at the hand's direct connection to the heart via the circulatory system and its

use in determining both physical and psychological imbalance. It is notable that Roderick recoils every time the Visitor attempts to gain possession of his hand or use his own hand to feel Roderick's forehead, as though the gesture were intrusive and could somehow reveal more of his hidden thoughts and feelings than he deems necessary.



Figure 41: Close-up of Roderick (Jean Debucourt)'s hands from *La Chute de la Maison Usher* (Epstein, 1928). Screen grab taken by author.

The gestural style and movements of the hand can serve as a powerful expression of a character's emotional conflict or inner abnormality, even if the hands are not in themselves abnormal. Conrad Veidt employs his remarkably expressive hands to great effect to convey degenerating sanity or emotional turmoil in both *Orlac's Hands* (1924) and *The Man Who Laughs* (1928). As Orlac, he seems to detach the rest of his body from his hands, interacting with them as though they were a separate character, illustrating Orlac's split personality.



Figure 42: Conrad Veidt's gestural language in *Orlacs Hände* (Wiene, 1924). Screen grabs taken by author.

In *The Man Who Laughs*, the emphasis placed on Gwynplaine (Veidt)'s undisguised hands compensates for the rigid immobility of his disfigured face. The face remains hidden for much of the film, leaving hand gestures to occupy the place of facial expressions. Their tremulous fingers reveal Gwynplaine's timidity and self-consciousness at the start and as their movements become stronger and more well-defined they express his growing confidence and readiness to defy those who have wronged him. In the first half of the film, Veidt keeps his hands raised furtively and held close together (slightly reminiscent of *Nosferatu*) as though he is constantly on the defensive. His movements are timid and restrained, and his self-consciousness is ever present even in moments of family tenderness. He attempts to cover his disfigurement in most of the scenes, either with a scarf or with his hands, and each time his hand movements and positions express something of his inner feelings. His hand clenches, claw-like as he hides his face from the laughing Josiana, offended and crushed by her derision, and intimidated by her sexual intensity. As he accepts and relishes the caresses of the blind Dea, he never forgets his deformity, gently but firmly guiding her searching hands away from his face.

As his character develops, his gestures change as well and his hands relinquish their defensive position. This is partly due to necessity, as he is called on to use them to actively defend himself from pursuit and assault, climb walls, and at one point hang perilously on the edge of a roof. Nevertheless, there is a distinct sense of increasing self-acceptance. This is most vividly reflected in his decision to reveal his deformity to Dea, deliberately leading her hands to his face, finally believing that his disfigurement does not define him.



Figure 43: Conrad Veidt's gestural language as Gwynplaine in *The Man Who Laughs* (Leni, 1929). Screen grabs taken by author.

Der Januskopf (F.W. Murnau's unauthorised 1920 Jekyll and Hyde adaptation) is now a lost film, but surviving contemporary reviews do not fail to mention Veidt's ability to communicate character and emotion through subtle hand movements.¹⁸⁹ It is evident that they were an integral element in his interpretation of this role as well. In preserved Jekyll and Hyde adaptations, much of the cinematic Hyde's physicality is based on convulsively hunched shoulders, stiff, jerking fingers, and an unsteady gait. The arms are rarely straightened, creating the illusion that they are somehow out

¹⁸⁹ Ludwig Brauner, "Rev. of *Der Januskopf*, dir. F.W. Murnau," *Der Kinematograph* 5 Sep. 1920; Fritz Podehl, "Rev. of *Der Januskopf*, dir. F.W. Murnau," *Der Film* 9 Apr. 1920; Martin Proskauer, "Rev. of *Der Januskopf*, dir. F.W. Murnau" *Film-Kurier* 29 Apr. 1920.

of proportion with the rest of the body, and the hands are frequently raised to just below face level. The wrist is held stiff with the hands hanging down or held out awkwardly, with clumsy, fumbling fingers. A great deal of emphasis is placed on the hands and fingers, and their gradual contortion is usually one of the early warning signs of an oncoming transformation. The transition from Jekyll to Hyde begins with the distortion of his hands.

The contorted hand as signifier of inner evil is used to great effect in Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922). Although conceptually, the Count's vampiric features are focused around his mouth and face, Murnau gives him unnaturally long, talon-like nails that suggest a predatory animal. This enhancement becomes an important component of Max Schrek's performance. His movements and poses are carefully calculated to show off the demonic hands to best advantage, casting threatening shadows and silhouettes with their claws or gathering them beneath his chin like a huge rodent.

IV.3.4. Duality Through Intertextual and Mythological Reference

Aside from the physical bodies of other characters, and visual cues in the monster's own gestural style, the monster's duality is also expanded through the embedding of external texts into the narrative, referencing the bodies of the characters they deal with and conflating them with that of the monster in question. This method is sometimes already employed in the literary originals, as when Shelley draws parallels between her characters and those of Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, or when Stoker references the same work by describing Dracula's ship as "a painted ship upon a painted ocean."¹⁹⁰ This description instantly evokes the

¹⁹⁰ Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2003) 110.

supernatural overtones of Coleridge's work, the image of the 'Nightmare Life-in-Death' and the haunted and tormented Mariner himself.

John S. Robertson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1920) references Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in its representation of Jekyll's motives for his unethical experiment. Rather than an extension of his philanthropic work, it becomes a deliberate desire to unleash his visceral evil side and indulge in its fantasies and debauchery without damaging his soul - exactly like Dorian Gray transferring the scars of his sinful lifestyle to his portrait while remaining pure and unsullied by vice. Sir George Carew (the father of Jekyll's fiancée in this version) bears more than a passing resemblance to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*'s Lord Henry Wotton. Some of his intertitles are in fact direct quotes from Wilde's novel, emphasising the link. Worldly and self-indulgent, he leads the inexperienced Jekyll into temptation, giving a darker meaning and motivation to Jekyll's use of his discovery. It is Carew who introduces Jekyll to this version's embodiment of the amoral woman - a sultry cabaret dancer named Gina. This situation directly parallels Dorian's theatre visit with the devious Lord Henry and his meeting with the beautiful actress Sibyl Vane - the beginning of his descent into depravity. The Dorian Gray connection is reinforced by Hyde's increasing deformity throughout the film. Hyde is the externalised record of Jekyll's moral decay just like Dorian's portrait, and while Jekyll and Dorian are able to project purity and propriety, their hidden doubles fester in the shadows.

Jean Epstein's adaptation of Edgar Allen Poe's *Fall of the House of Usher* draws heavily on the short story "The Oval Portrait" (also by Poe), the story of an artist so obsessed with painting his wife's portrait that he allows the living woman to die of

neglect.¹⁹¹ Epstein presents Madeline Usher as Roderick Usher's wife rather than his sister, superficially normalising their intimate relationship. He brings back the element of perversion however, by inventing an Usher family tradition - every Usher male is obsessed with painting a portrait of his wife. In Epstein's film, as in "The Oval Portrait," the painting grows more and more lifelike, draining its model until it absorbs her spirit. Epstein brings the idea of spiritual transfer between woman and painting full circle, showing the portrait consumed by flames as Madeline returns to life. This new dynamic brings even deeper levels of intertextuality with it as well. Combining the element of Madeline's resurrection with the relationship dynamic taken from "The Oval Portrait", Epstein highlights the vampiric and "undead" overtones of the story and Roderick as an active force in their enactment. Exactly like the classic vampire, Roderick kills Madeline by draining her life force (to feed his art in this case rather than himself), then she arises from the grave (presumably through another exchange with the painting, which burns at the same time). Like the bite of the vampire, Roderick's painting leaves her transformed but immortal.

In some cases film adaptations directly incorporate references to recognisable mythic archetypes, appropriating their symbolic implications. Tracing the influence of Julian/Chaney's *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925), Clarens notes that its influence

has been felt in most horror efforts since. A good deal of Cocteau's *La Belle et la Bête* (1946) obviously derives from the long, dreamlike descent into the Phantom's netherworld, Christine (Mary Philbin) astride an incongruous stallion, her long white veil trailing, or, gliding in a black gondola, the Phantom as Charon, along the vaulted canals. Cocteau, on the other hand, knows the value of his symbols (the mirror, the horse) and those at Universal did not know the value of theirs.¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ Edgar Allan Poe, "The Oval Portrait," *The Penguin Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allen Poe* (London: Penguin) 290–292.

¹⁹² Clarens 67.

Clarens's comparison draws attention to the fact that some of the parallels between *Phantom* and *La Belle at la Bête* arise from a common source - the tale of Beauty and the Beast.¹⁹³ Symbolically, the Paris Opera House takes the place of the Beast's sentient castle. Despite striking similarities, the plot of *Phantom* diverges from the *Beauty and the Beast* paradigm, but the subliminal parallel serves to heighten the poignant irony of the resolution. In the fairytale, the Beast dies when abandoned by Beauty but he is resurrected as a handsome prince when she accepts and loves him the way he is (as a Beast). In *Phantom*, Christine already has the choice between the Beast (Erik) and the Prince (the handsome, aristocratic soldier, Raoul) from the start. The same general formula applies; the deformed Erik coerces her into his realm against her will and releases her with the condition that she will return to him. Like Beauty, she goes back on her promise and unlike the Beast, Erik kidnaps her. Christine proceeds to reject Erik for his unappealing exterior and choose the ready-made prince, Raoul, leaving Erik to die with no hope of resurrection.

The story of *Notre Dame de Paris*'s Quasimodo is also strongly informed by the Beauty and the Beast archetype. However, the only transformation he can hope for is from life to death. Exactly like Erik, he is not destined to become a handsome prince. In all the early film versions, Quasimodo's story is one of unrequited love and self-sacrifice for his beloved. The 1928 Paul Leni adaptation of *The Man Who Laughs* deals with similar themes but demonstrates a surprising reversal. Although deformed, it is Gwynplaine (Conrad Veidt) who becomes the object of unrequited love (Josiana) and already possesses the love of the woman he desires (Dea). Paralleling

¹⁹³ The likeliest direct literary source for both Cocteau's film and Leroux's novel (*Phantom*) is either Madame Gabrielle Susanne Barbot de Gallon de Villeneuve's 1740 literary fairytale or Madame Jeanne Marie Le Prince de Beaumont 1756 retelling. However the story has far more ancient roots in various mythologies.

the fates of Erik and Quasimodo, Hugo's novel ends with Gwynplaine's death. The Leni film discards this ending, providing its Beast with a transformation of a different sort. He does not become handsome, but Gwynplaine transitions from doubt and vulnerability to strength and confidence as he takes control of his own fate, rejects wealth and affluence, and finally reveals his deformity to Dea, who accepts him. This change from the novel actually brings the film closer to *Beauty and the Beast*, only replacing physical beauty with spiritual purity.



Figure 44: The subterranean river crossing in *The Phantom of the Opera* (Julian, 1925). Film frame.

Clarens's mention of Charon crossing the River Styx in conjunction with Julian/Chaney's *Phantom* is another apt analogy.¹⁹⁴ The image of Erik's boat gliding across a black underground lake evokes a number of mythological underworld figures. This is supported by the narrative and the design of Erik's skull-like makeup and dramatic costumes and his crypt-inspired architectural space. He becomes

¹⁹⁴ Clarens 67.

Charon the boatman as he ferries other characters across his lake, admitting them into his realm or casting them into its depths to perish. He is Hades himself, smuggling Persephone into his crypt-like world, releasing her into the upper regions only when she promises to return to him. He is also the fallen angel Mephistopheles, offering his female Faust the riches of musical genius in exchange for her soul. The voice he offers her is like the pomegranate tempting Persephone in the Underworld - if she accepts it, she must stay with him in the Opera forever. If she chooses life (Raoul) she will leave the Opera and her career behind.

Another Styx-like river crossing appears in the funeral scene in Epstein's *Fall of the House of Usher* (1928). The symbolically-infused design of this sequence, combining images of death and regeneration, grounds the action in a fantastical, mythic realm. Darragh O'Donoghue suggests that this scene can be construed as an "animistic regeneration of nature" or "a triumphant act of will by Usher (however hallucinatory), re-enacting the transference of life and death of the portrait." He argues that Epstein, "for all his avant-garde pretensions, offers a more conventional, Romantic Poe that owes much more to the mediation of Baudelaire, with his valorisation of the artist as visionary, social transgressor and purveyor of mystic meaning."¹⁹⁵ This interpretation makes Epstein's Roderick a variation on the Orpheus archetype - a heartbroken artist endowed with the mystic ability to bring his beloved back from the Underworld (suggested by the river crossing made by Madeline's coffin). This reading helps clarify the film's unusual ending. Epstein goes entirely against Poe's original ending, giving both of the Ushers a chance to

¹⁹⁵ O'Donoghue.

escape from the burning House. This is surprising as Roderick's intense physical and emotional bond with the House is foregrounded throughout the film.

Both O'Donoghue and Richard Abel misrepresent the choreography of the final minutes of the film, insisting that Madeline "leads Roderick and his friend out of the inferno to safety," although it is clearly the other way around.¹⁹⁶ The fact that Roderick is not lead out by Madeline and that he makes a conscious effort to get them both out instead of passively giving himself up to the conflagration is highly significant. After previously allowing his wife to die for the sake of his art, he is now consciously leaving the House (and the painting) to burn, as he rescues Madeline's physical body. This clearly indicates a shift in attitude whether imagined or real. It is a liberation from the lure of artifice and fantasy (as symbolised by the House and its contents) in search of a new, more natural life. Roderick is able to survive the loss of the House because it is a part of him that he has voluntarily rejected. Epstein depicts his Roderick as a successful Orpheus who has resisted the temptation to look back and has escaped the Underworld in the embrace of his wife.

IV.3.5. Duality Through the Inorganic Body

The duality of the monster figure is expressed through his relationship with both organic and inorganic bodies. Cinematic features as ethereal as light and darkness and composition for instance, can become a very palpable presence in visualising a monster's duality. Anna Powell discusses the duality of Dracula/Count Orlock in Murnau's *Nosferatu* in terms of light and shadow. She notes that Dracula's journey is

¹⁹⁶ O'Donoghue; Abel, *French Film Theory* 464.

accompanied by the darkness of gathering storm clouds, and that the shadows of other characters become more emphasised when they fall under his influence.¹⁹⁷

Murnau's knowledge of and appreciation for art and art history shines through vividly in his compositions, the interplay of light and shadow, his understanding of form and line, his involvement in the process of set and costume design, and his ideas about the role of the camera. Jonathan Rigby notes that Murnau

had recourse to visual echoes of Bocklin, Friedrich and other Romantic painters. But all of these artful flourishes were aimed at recreating something vividly present in Stoker's novel yet so far ignored in German horror pictures – the intrusion of the abnormal into the normal, the dislocating secret of all the most effective nightmares.¹⁹⁸

Nosferatu draws a very clear distinction between the supernatural world of the vampire and the familiar, peaceful, and conventional world that he invades. The compositional and lighting schemes developed for these two contrasting worlds double the characters they belong to, expressing their personalities then morphing and merging when the two worlds collide. The house of the Hutters is cozy, flood-lit with rampant sunshine coming through the large windows, floral wallpaper, and flowing diaphanous curtains. Orlock's castle is filled with Gothic arches that frame his figure like coffins, high-backed chairs, and large, shadowy open spaces. The castle set is frequently shown in low-angle shots with hard-lined lighting, deep, dark cast shadows and darkened recesses. There are more shots showing depth and distance creating a sense of monumentality and emptiness. Rim lights make the edges of the figures glow in an unearthly manner reminiscent of the melancholic lighting of Friedrich's landscapes with their lonely graves.

¹⁹⁷ Anna Powell, *Deleuze and Horror Film* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2005) 120-8.

¹⁹⁸ Jonathan Rigby, *Studies in Terror: Landmarks of Horror Cinema* (Signum Books, 2011) 16-7.



Figure 45: Caspar David Friedrich, *The Abbey In the Oakwood* (1810). Oil on canvas.



Figure 46: Count Orlock's castle in *Nosferatu* (Murnau, 1922). Screen grab taken by author.

Murnau makes highly effective (and affective) use of shadows and silhouettes to construct the aura of a creature belonging to another world and convey a paranoid sense of evil omnipresence. Hutter's discovery of Orlock sleeping in his coffin is shot from an acute high angle that seems to oppress him and pin him to the ground. Orlock's approaching ship, although not extraordinary in itself, is rendered portentous by the movement of the camera, floating past it in an unseen boat. His

progress up the stairs to Ellen's bedroom is shown almost exclusively through his cast shadow as it travels across the wall. In the room, he appears only through the terrified gaze of Ellen as his supernaturally large shadow engulfs her, the darkness obliterating her innocent white figure. According to Eisner, Murnau re-conceptualised this scene at the last minute to withhold any glimpses of the vampire's physical form and emphasise his otherworldly, disembodied quality.



Figure 47: Count Orlock (Max Schrek)'s shadow in *Nosferatu* (Murnau, 1922). Screen grab taken by author.

Orlock's victims are stalked and devoured by his shadow, sometimes even before he physically appears on screen. Although the sets remain the same, the Hutter's universe is transformed through the use of light, shadow and camera angles as it is invaded by the vampire's influence. As Wisborg is gripped by the plague, its streets begin to assume the lighting and compositional qualities displayed in the Transylvanian section. A high angle shot reveals the long, winding street outside Ellen's window, rendered sinister by the jagged shadows of the houses falling across

it, a slow procession of undertakers bearing coffins, proceeding along single file.

Angular shadows, unbalanced compositions, and uncomfortable camera angles are as much a part of Orlock's character as are his make-up and costume.

Physical objects and seemingly inanimate entities also frequently double the monster character in both literature and film. The device of the inanimate double can be a useful one for cinematic adaptations as it provides a visual, external record of the monster's deteriorating psychological/spiritual condition. This type of double can be a literal embodiment of the Jungian shadow, a mirror reflection as in *The Student of Prague* (Rye and Wegener 1913 and Galeen 1926), a portrait as in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, or an entire building as in *Fall of the House of Usher*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. In both the Epstein and Webber/Watson adaptations of *Usher*, the House is visually defined as the site of Roderick's "deformity" and his fully materialised double. It bears tangible marks of all the distortion contained within his mind, and reflects his gradual deterioration, much like Dorian Gray's portrait. All of Poe's ambiguous implications of hallucination, multiple layers of doubling, sexual deviation, and split personality are channelled into the concept of the "House of Usher", used interchangeably to signify both the architectural structure and its human inhabitants. It is depicted as a complete universe with a history and lifecycle, its own microclimate, male and female halves, and its own process of decline and death.



Figure 48: Erik (Lon Chaney)’s shadow in *The Phantom of the Opera* (Julian, 1925). Screen grab taken by author.

The Julian/Chaney *Phantom of the Opera* constructs a similar relationship between Erik and the Opera House, allowing his human body to merge almost seamlessly with the physical/architectural body of the Opera. The prominent texture of the walls shows through his cast shadow, while his three-dimensional body is kept carefully beyond the camera’s frame of vision. He seems to actually become part of the wall, moving soundlessly across its surface and penetrating to the other side without needing a door. Rising to the Opera’s upper levels, he maintains his ability to camouflage with any of the building’s guises. In the colourful masquerade scene he is transformed into a flamboyant figure in radiant crimson garments. A vibrant cloak trails him down the steps, fleetingly mimicking their shape just as his shadow had embraced the contours of the walls in the murky cellars. Shots of his hands emerging from seemingly solid walls are composed in a way that makes them appear as though

they belong to the wall itself and have no other body to command them. These images are strongly reminiscent of the living candle-holders in Cocteau's *La Belle et la Bête*; disembodied limbs controlled by nothing but the wall from which they protrude. The concept of the building or environment as a double for a human/humanoid monster will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter Seven, "The Architectural Monster."

IV.3.6. The Mirror

Among other elements of set and prop design that serve to illustrate the silent film monster's duality, the device of the mirror assumes a particularly powerful symbolic role. Rank points out "the equivalence of the mirror and shadow as images, both of which appear to the ego as its likeness" in a broad range of creative expressions including the tales of E.T.A. Hoffman, the fairy tales of Hans Christian Andersen, the film *The Student of Prague*, and many other sources.¹⁹⁹ Elements of Rank's theories on duality and the mirror image are echoed in the much later studies of Jacques Lacan and his theory of the Mirror Stage – "the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image" – a "mirage" that presents to him the imagined "maturation of his power" in an ideal image.²⁰⁰ This theory and its conception of doubling and self-perception are very relevant to the monster figure in Gothic literature and its visualisation in film. The Gothic monster is constantly confronted with his mirror image both literally in the form of physical mirrors, and

¹⁹⁹ Rank 10.

²⁰⁰ Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage," *Contemporary Film Theory*, ed. Antony Easthope (London; New York: Longman, 1993) 34.

metaphorically through his struggle with issues of identification, transformation, and duality.

Prawer extends the symbolic power of the mirror, seeing it as a vehicle for “claustrophobic” self-recognition and the “agoraphobic” passage into “an unfamiliar space”, as well as a symbol for the dream-like nature of the cinematic experience itself.²⁰¹ David Huckvale includes the mirror among the “eleven motifs and images” that define Gothic horror, and discusses its representation as passage into a nightmarish or subconscious realm in horror films. Linking the mirror to the concept of the disunited self, he asserts that “we all contain our mirror image within us. Only by looking at our reflections and acknowledging our contradictory natures can we hope to find salvation and attain psychological good health.”²⁰² He touches on the use of the mirror as reflection of the subconscious in H.P. Lovecraft’s “The Outsider”:

The narrator of the tale has no idea who or what he is and doesn’t realise why he causes such mayhem when encountering other people. He then sees a hideous monster beneath a golden arch which turns out to be his own reflection in ‘a cold unyielding surface of polished glass.’ The parable here suggests that until we face up to what Jung called our shadow (those monstrous aspects of the subconscious), we will never know who we are. Lovecraft’s Outsider remains an outsider, but at least he knows the truth.²⁰³

Considering the elements of mutual reflection and inversion inherent in Ben Carré’s designs of the upper and lower realms in Julian/Chaney’s *Phantom of the Opera*, it is only fitting that the main portal between the two is through a mirror. The device of the mirror-as-door (as opposed to a door concealed within a plain wall) adds a wealth of symbolic and psychological implications to Christine’s passage into

²⁰¹ Prawer, *Caligari’s Children* 78.

²⁰² Huckvale 132.

²⁰³ Huckvale 132; H.P. Lovecraft, “The Outsider,” *Crawling Chaos* (London: Creation Press, 1992) 50–55.

Erik's territory. As she approaches the mirror the reflective surface captures her image, inducing her to walk *through* it as the mirror slides away before her and she enters the otherworldly realm of her mentor. Mythologizing this moment of crossing, Rigby likens Christine and Erik's journey through the cellars to "a mythological descent into the Underworld."²⁰⁴ This interpretation of the scene is strongly supported by the presence of a host of conspicuous Christian and Pagan death symbols.

If the underground sets are read as an architectural manifestation of Erik's subconscious, then Christine has just entered his mind, revealing an alternate, twisted world filled with references to the familiar world above. In doing so, she also solidifies her role as Erik's double by allowing her reflection to become his doorway. The mirror is a particularly potent symbol in this case, representing the image of the perceived self and the constructed self (it is a dressing room mirror before which Christine assumes the costumes and masks of various roles). Rank's concept of the mirror image as a reflection of the ego and a vehicle of self-knowledge is here transformed from a metaphorical journey to a physical one, in which Christine will pass through her reflection and enter a world in which she will learn about herself and the world she thought she knew.

With their deceptively straightforward reflectivity, mirrors are a powerful tool for concealing or revealing a character's true image. Huckvale compares mirrors to portraits, saying that "portraits are obviously very closely related to mirrors, and mirrors have their own part to play in Gothic horror. Vampires cast no reflection in mirrors because there is no soul to reflect. Their existence is more of an illusion than

²⁰⁴ Rigby, *American Gothic* 45.

a reflection.”²⁰⁵ The vampire’s relationship with mirrors provides useful insights into the role of the mirror in the monster’s self-perception and presentation. In his encyclopaedia of vampiric concepts, David J. Skal devotes an entry to mirrors, explaining that “the vampire’s traditional failure to reflect in mirrors is, on the face of it, simple evidence of a wraith-like inhumanity; on a deeper level, however, the idea is more a matter of psychological denial – the reason we block out the vampire’s reflection is to avoid seeing our own face in the glass.”²⁰⁶



Figure 49: Gwynplaine (Conrad Veidt) and his mirror in *The Man Who Laughs* (Leni, 1929). Screen grab taken by author.

In Leni/Veidt’s *The Man Who Laughs* (1928), mirrors become an important part of the film’s visual language. They absorb and reveal their owners’ internal qualities recreating and twisting the mirage of the constructed self. Both Gwynplaine and Josiana are depicted using mirrors to prepare themselves for performances of very

²⁰⁵ Huckvale 126.

²⁰⁶ Skal, *Vampire* 149.

different kinds. Gwynplaine uses his mirror in applying his clown makeup, concealing his distorted face beneath layers of paint and drawing attention to its hideousness at the same time to entertain a crowd of strangers. His straightforward, square mirror serves both as a tool and as a painful visual reminder of his disfigurement. Mercilessly revealing his deformity, it hides his suffering human soul behind a fragmented monstrous exterior, and crushes his hope of feeling complete. Josiana uses her mirror to celebrate beauty and virility rather than ugliness, preparing perform to an audience of one. In her oval-shaped, extravagantly ornate mirror, Josiana sees only her carnal, physical perfection, ignoring the ruthless and vain nature within.



Figure 50: Josiana (Olga Baclanova)'s mirror reflection in *The Man Who Laughs* (Leni, 1929). Screen grab taken by author.

The use of the mirror device in Edison's *Frankenstein* (1910) is also meticulously planned, using framing and a basic fade effect to create a potent image of duality and

self-recognition. A single large, rectangular mirror in the corner of the set is placed in a way that allows it to reinforce the symbolism of the film as the action unfolds, and to reveal parts of the scene that would otherwise have remained outside the frame. Gazing into a mirror, the Creature vanishes, leaving its reflection behind to confront Frankenstein. Frankenstein enters and stands facing the mirror, seeing the Creature's reflection as his own, in a powerful Dorian Gray/Jekyll and Hyde moment of visual splitting. Dispelling it with his strength of will, Frankenstein watches as the image fades and his own reflection looks back at him. His remorse and his love for Elizabeth erase the Creature's visage, symbolically clearing his troubled conscience as well - the evil side of his nature has been discarded so he no longer sees it in his mirror reflection. Drawing its emotional intensity from the symbolic and emotive power of this image, the camera creates a complex dialogue between the silent character, his subconscious double, and the viewers of the film.



Figure 51: Frankenstein (Augustus Phillips) sees the Creature (Charles Stanton Ogle) as his mirror image in *Frankenstein* (Edison Manufacturing Company 1910), directed by J. Searle Dawley. Screen grab taken by author.

IV.3. Doubling the Void: The Monster and the Embodiment of Lack

The Void is a broad concept that connects to numerous psychological theories, but is particularly relevant to this research for its connection to the process of “becoming monstrous” and falling into the abyss in search of an “unattainable ideal.” In this process, the monster serves as an embodiment of lack, a physical representation of the unachievable. The theories of 18th century philosopher Edmund Burke had a profound influence on 18th and 19th century Gothic literature and the later films that it inspired. Burke’s concept of the “negative sublime” – a sublime that may be frightening, painful, and aesthetically unattractive – and its logical evolution in the ideas of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel is essential to understanding the monster’s potential for sublimity and his connection to the Void.²⁰⁷ Hegel insists that the sublime object is not a reflection of the existence of a divine supersensible realm, as no such realm exists. Merely the shadow of an imaginary ideal, the sublime object is a curtain that conceals the Nothingness that we do not wish to acknowledge. It is irresistible because it suggests a desire that can never be satisfied.

If the physical “sublime object” is seen as the embodiment of a fundamental lack, as the inability to attain or express an illusory ideal, then the monster is its ultimate incarnation. With his linguistic and symbolic implication of physical and/or emotional incompleteness the monster is an ideal vehicle for exploring deficiencies in both society and the individual. Echoing the contradictory nature of the sublime itself the physically divergent monstrous body is sublime both in its excess, and in the emptiness of the void that it represents.

²⁰⁷ Thomas Weiskel, *The Romantic Sublime: Studies in the Structure and Psychology of Transcendence* (Baltimore London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1976) 83-7; Burke 18.

Summarising the overriding principle of the German Idealist sublime, Philip Shaw underscores the idea that “the emphasis falls not so much on the triumph of reason as on the failure of imagination as it strives to realise the ineffable.”²⁰⁸ This failure to “realise the ineffable” is inherent in the monster on multiple external and internal levels. While operating as a stand-in for a wider societal or psychic gap in the context of a literary or cinematic narrative, the monster character simultaneously struggles with his own internal void. A desire to achieve an impossible ideal, culminating in an ultimately destructive encounter with the void beyond is characteristic of the trajectory of the Gothic monster narrative. Within this framework the monster projects the sublime externally, while striving to gain it for himself internally.

Vijay Mishra adds a further level of depth to the internalization of the sublime in Gothic literature. He illustrates how the Gothic genre synthesised 18th century ideas and Kantian and post-Kantian analysis and transformed what was an “aesthetic into a psychology.” This increasingly psychological approach involved identifying “the sublime as a moment of entry into the unconscious, the ‘unplumbable’.” The mind is presented with an idea that is too overwhelming for comprehension or expression and is jarred into “a momentary surrender of the law of reason.” Mishra compares this effect to that produced by the “uncanny.”²⁰⁹

By all accounts the magnetism of the sublime is powerful, whether it draws its strength from divine sources or from the suggestion of unquenchable desire. For the monster however, this attraction inevitably leads to tragic and destructive consequences. The sublime’s linkage to the idea of “the overcoming of restrictions,

²⁰⁸ Philip Shaw, *The Sublime* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006) 90.

²⁰⁹ Vijay Mishra, *The Gothic Sublime* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994) 19.

even to the point of death” is especially applicable to the process of becoming monstrous as presented in the Gothic narrative.²¹⁰ In the much-quoted words of Nietzsche: “when you fight against *Ungeheuern* [the monstrous], it is necessary to be careful not to become yourself *ungeheuer*. If you look for a long time at the abyss, the abyss will fix its glance in you.”²¹¹

The Gothic monster (and his early 20th century, cinematic inheritor) is essentially one who looks too far into the abyss in search of the imaginary ideal. The ideal in question can range from personal physical perfection, to the fantasy of requited love, all the way to the transformation of society itself through scientific progress. Frustrated by his inability to reach the unreachable, he struggles against the monstrosity he perceives around him, becoming monstrous himself in the process. He transforms into a destructive power for others, just as he is destroyed by his own desire.

This destructive process can also be interpreted as an attempt to achieve “pure freedom,” “which cannot be immediately realised in the legal order. The attempt to do so nevertheless leads to a struggle for life and death.” According to Kant and Hegel’s theories of the *absolute spirit* (the “lord”), the desire to liberate oneself from the constraints of “finitude” and mortality itself inevitably leads to chaos and destruction.²¹² Whether the monster is sublime from the outset and overreaches into monstrosity as claimed by Kant, passes through monstrosity and is elevated to the

²¹⁰ Shaw 114.

²¹¹ Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. R. J Hollingdale (London: Penguin, 2003) 146.

²¹² Paul Cobben, “The Lord and the Sublime: Free Life’s Transcendence of Finitude,” *The Sublime and Its Teleology: Kant, German Idealism, Phenomenology* (Leiden: Brill, 2011) 133–158. 153

sublime at the peak of his journey as argued by Jacob Rogozinski, or is a personification of the terrifying and multi-planed Burkian sublime is debatable.²¹³

Ultimately, the trajectory of the Gothic monster narrative as seen through the lens of the sublime is circular. As the sublime object, the monster character owes his existence to the void or abyss that he represents. At the same time, his journey consists of identifying and battling the void, and striving to transcend finitude, while consciously or unconsciously destroying all those drawn in by his own sublime aura. Doomed never to achieve the ideal he seeks, he faces defeat and annihilation and is reabsorbed back into the abyss from whence he came. This process creates what can be referred to as “reverse-duality”; the monster doubles the absence he represents, creating doubles to fill the void and spreading destruction in the process.

In *Phantom of the Opera* adaptations, the Opera House set encompasses Erik’s deficiencies and becomes the visual manifestation of his inner void. It sustains and supports him but it also embodies his personal sense of lack - an element that varies from film to film based on the way the character, his backstory and his motivations are interpreted. As a monster, Erik is incomplete by definition and it is in the depths of the Opera’s cellars that he seeks what he has lost or never had (which varies between films). The undergrounds illustrate the presence of this void while also indicating the impossibility of filling it. They become a mirage of an ideal world that does not exist, just like that created by operatic productions with their ethereal sets and melodious, graceful depictions of suffering and death.

Ostensibly, the 1925 Julian/Chaney and 1943 Lubin/Rains films (both produced by Universal) are shot on the same sets, less than twenty years apart. Within the

²¹³ Jacob Rogozinski, “The Sublime Monster,” *The Sublime and Its Teleology: Kant, German Idealism, Phenomenology* (Leiden: Brill, 2011) 159–168.

narrative and aesthetic frameworks of the films however, they appear very different and not merely because the Lubin/Rains film is shot in full colour. Variations in lighting, framing, choice of shooting angle and distribution of props help reflect the psychological differences between Lon Chaney's hideous, tormented, extravagant Erik and Claude Rains's tiered, disillusioned Erique Claudin. Chaney's Erik seeks beauty and magnificence and wants to escape the shameful stigma of his real face. He surrounds himself with glamorous costumes and dramatic gestures such as his appearance as the Red Death at the masquerade ball or his threat to detonate the entire Opera House if Christine rejects him. Rains's timid, defeated Claudin returns to the Opera as to a beloved home that no longer has a place for him. His Opera is not monumental and powerful, it is homely and nostalgic. His version of the cellars has none of the flamboyant theatrical trappings of Chaney's version, only an old piano that will fill the emptiness with music. Chaney's Erik longs to live, to experience the joy and luxury of the life he has been denied. Rains's Claudin only strives to fulfil his self-imposed duty to Christine before he dies in peace. In Ford's *Phantom of the Violin* (1914), Ellis dreams of understanding, vengeance and closure, embodied in the skeletons that share his dungeon. They include the skeleton of an adulterous wife who confesses and laments her infidelity, a surrogate for the apology he never received from the unfaithful Rosa.

Different as their inner voids are, for Ellis, Erik and Claudin the cellars are a fantasy realm of impossible wish-fulfilment, the promise of a life that is irretrievably lost. Erik's disfigured face is invisible here because there is no one here to see it and no mirrors to confront him with the harshness of reality. The mystical, dreamy atmosphere that all of the underground *Phantom* sets share marks them as a

repository for fantasy. In the novel and to a lesser degree in the Julian/Chaney film, the cellars offer Christine her fantasy as well - the fatherly love and guidance that she lacks and the angelic voice she longs to attain. All of this can be hers if she joins Erik on his side of the walls but it will be an illusion, like the vanishing mirror through which she enters. Although the silent film monster (and his creators) constantly strive to surround him with animate and inanimate doubles, in the end he is left with nothing but the bottomless void that they represent.

Chapter V - Types of Monstrous Deformity in Silent Film, Their Mechanics and Symbolism

V.1. Deformed Bodies

In giving literary monsters a physical form, early cinema was faced with the need to create an instantly recognisable, iconic image that could represent the monster's twisted psyche without the aid of speech. In many films this led to the development of deformities that were under-defined in the original text or entirely absent. The choice of physical aberrations to highlight relied on cultural meanings encoded in art, literature and theatre, all fusing together to create the ultimate image of the cinematic monster. The mechanism of this process has been analysed by Christopher Frayling in relation to the design of the Creature (Boris Karloff) in James Whale's

Frankenstein (1931):

In Hollywood films 'the creature' was to become not a new Adam, but a thing of scars and skewers – based on an image of the madhouse entitled *The Chinchillas* from Goya's series of prints *Caprichos/Caprices* (1799). His huge dome-like forehead and big feet made him resemble, as did Goya's print, someone with an acromegalic condition and a serious pituitary problem; an image of disability (like most 'monsters' in popular culture) rather than of beauty.²¹⁴

For the silent film literary monster, this process established four types of deformed bodies as the most culturally recognisable - the hunchback, the dwarf, the limper, and the "horrific" face. Cinematic adaptations appropriated these icons regardless of whether such deformities were specified in the source text or not. For each of the monsters discussed in the following examples, one of the key deformities listed above visually dominates above the rest. However, it is important to acknowledge that more than one type can and often does intersect in a single

²¹⁴ Frayling, *Nightmare* 44.

cinematic monster figure. Each of these features bears a wealth of symbolic meaning and applying more than one to a given character could enrich his cinematic image with further levels of connotation.

V.1.1. The Dwarf

Hyde (from Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*) rapidly became a dwarf on film without specifically being one on paper. The image of Edward Hyde poses a very particular challenge in terms of cinematic visualisation. He is not a hunchback like Quasimodo (*Notre Dame de Paris*), and he does not have a grotesquely disfigured face like Erik (*The Phantom of the Opera*) or Gwynplaine (*The Man Who Laughs*). He is no more and no less than the embodiment of pure evil, which is much easier said than shown. Stevenson gives only the scantest shreds of a physical description, with every eyewitness account emphasising the powerful and inexplicable sense of dread and disgust that he inspires.

The closest version of an objective description notes that "Mr. Hyde was pale and dwarfish", but even this quickly dissolves into abstraction with: "he gave an impression of deformity without any nameable malformation, he had a displeasing smile."²¹⁵ Jekyll's faithful butler echoes this description, also referring to Hyde as "more of a dwarf" as compared to Jekyll, who is "a tall, fine build of a man."²¹⁶ It appears from other responses, descriptions of Hyde's movements and actions, and Jekyll's own sensations, that Hyde is not really a dwarf in any disabling medical sense. In fact, he is slighter, more energetic, and much younger than the restrained,

²¹⁵ Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1888) 12.

²¹⁶ Stevenson 33.

heavy-set, middle-aged Jekyll, and grows stronger as his influence over Jekyll increases. Hence, even the most specific description given is symbolic rather than objective.

All of these contradictions make it very hard to form a concrete visual image of Hyde, which was presumably Stevenson's intention. Any stage or film adaptation that dealt with this material had to come up with its own solution for making Hyde's ethereal deformity and spiritual degradation palpable to the audience. This was especially true in silent film, where the effect could not be aided by the harsh sound of his voice, or by extensive statements from other characters describing their negative feelings towards him. The solution resorted to most frequently by silent filmmakers was to literalise the odd sensation described by materialising Hyde's unnamable malformation, externalising his evil in his misshapen frame and contorted features. This level of distortion was especially necessary as Jekyll and Hyde were traditionally played by the same actor. While Stevenson's Jekyll and Hyde are described as men of diametrically opposed body types, the cinematic Jekyll needed to be able to make the transformation with the only body he had. The addition of exaggerated deformity and heavy makeup effects moulded the contours of the actor's body into a new shape, aiding his differentiation between the two personalities and making the transformation itself more dramatic.

Stevenson's cursory usage of the term "dwarf" was turned into a full-blown statement, anchoring Hyde's disturbing physicality in a recognisable deformity. Silent Jekyll and Hyde adaptations display a surprising consistency in their design of Hyde's makeup. They share a set of basic features that create a conventional cinematic Hyde image that would have been instantly recognisable to audiences of

the time. The main identifiers that recur persistently up to 1929 include: a shaggy, disheveled wig of dark, shoulder-length hair, prominent and crooked artificial teeth, and a hunched, lopsided posture that ranges from an exaggerated slouch to the suggestion of medical deformities and disabilities such as kyphosis and dwarfism. In fact, allusions to dwarfism and artificially constructed differences in height between Jekyll and Hyde are very common in silent adaptations.



Figure 52: Richard Mansfield as both Jekyll and Hyde in the 1887 Thomas Russell Sullivan theatrical production. Cabinet card.

Judging by surviving publicity images, these elements were already present in the makeup used by Richard Mansfield (with the exception of the false teeth) in the Sullivan theatrical production. The reference to dwarfism is especially emphasised in

the Turner/Bosworth (1908), Henderson/Cruze (1912), Brenon/Baggott (1913), and Hayden/Lewis (1920) versions, where Hyde assumes a hunched/crouched posture that severely stunts his height. The 1897 Fish and Forepaugh play (the direct source for the 1908 Hobart Bosworth film), even introduces a special costume effect in the stage directions, allowing the actor to conceal his contorted posture and create the illusion that his height has significantly decreased. It is clear from the play's highly detailed instructions that stage productions had to deal with the additional challenge of live, on-stage transformation sequences. Various easily adjustable elements and hidden props needed to be built into the costume and set to enable this effect.²¹⁷ The makeup had to be simplified to a degree where the performer could apply it within minutes, incorporating the process seamlessly into the choreography of the scene.

The transfer of the character into film offered both greater flexibility and greater challenges. The possibilities of proximity and magnification afforded by the close-up demanded more sophisticated makeup techniques and a more advanced treatment of Hyde's face. However, montage techniques, cuts, fades, and other cinematic tools that had already been available since the late 19th century, solved this problem easily. By allowing the makeup to be applied off-camera, and still maintaining the illusion that the change had happened in real time, films could provide a more ambitiously designed and more physically distorted Hyde. In film versions the reduction in height is also accompanied by a waddling gait, bow-leggedness, and limited arm coordination connected to impaired elbow mobility – all symptoms associated with pseudoachondroplasia, a common form of clinical dwarfism.²¹⁸ The

²¹⁷ Fish and Forepaugh 3-4.

²¹⁸ Daniel H. Cohn, "Pseudoachondroplasia," *National Center for Biotechnology Information*, 20 Sep. 2012 <<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK1487/>>.

more extreme iterations of the Hyde character include all three key abnormalities - dwarfism, hunched shoulders/back, and a severe limp.

V.1.2. The Hunchback

Unlike Hyde, *Notre Dame de Paris*'s Quasimodo is actually described as having very specific deformities. His hunchback is only one of multiple deformities ascribed to him by Hugo, but it is the one singled out by filmmakers for its visually striking nature. In the novel, Quasimodo also possesses a severely malformed face, is blind in one eye, stone deaf, and lame. Few silent adaptations went quite as far as Hugo's original description in the novel and the degree of physical aberration varied widely from film to film. Quasimodo's deafness, a significant contributor to his social alienation in the novel, becomes all but irrelevant in the context of silent film where communication is primarily gestural for all characters. In films, the cumulative effect of the more subtle or unusable deformities was generally channelled into the hump, replacing many smaller features with a single iconically recognisable one. It is the hump that gives the cinematic Quasimodo his characteristic shape.

Although a large number of silent *Notre Dame* adaptations are considered lost, it is still possible to judge some of the aesthetic decisions made with respect to levels of deformity by looking through preserved production stills and reading contemporary reviews. While Silent Era reviews are not necessarily the most reliable sources and are highly subjective, they are also extremely descriptive and much can be inferred both from what is said and from what isn't. As the most extravagantly deformed of the silent literary monsters, Quasimodo is an interesting case to analyse

both in terms of the possibilities he offers for visual design and in terms of the discourse on morality and physical aberration.

As a rule, Quasimodo is of course primarily visually defined by his crooked spine. The extent of his facial deformity varies from film to film as does its significance to his character. The 1909 film *The Hunchback* starring Frank Keenan is a “modernised” variation on Hugo’s novel. It is now considered lost, but contemporary reviews suggest that the film engaged with this issue on a symbolic level. As the alcoholic hunchback is turned from his evil ways by the power of love, his face loses its “brutish cast”, as “the innate nobility of the man’s real self shines out through untroubled eyes and is displayed in the fine markings of the well-cut features.”²¹⁹ It is evident from this description that the face of Keenan’s hunchback is deformed in expression rather than design and its gradual alteration becomes a signifier for his evolving moral character. This type of purely facial transfiguration must rely entirely on the possibilities of the cinematic close-up. Significantly, his distorted *body* seems to have little bearing on his potential for innate evil as he is still a hunchback when he dies saving his noble benefactress.

The physical construction of a hunchback was not a complicated challenge in itself, as techniques for costume-padding and postural contortion had been refined for centuries on stage. Most of the actors appearing in silent film would have had some level of stage training or experience, and would employ it readily in creating screen characters as well. Individual actors vary in the degree of emphasis placed on the hump, as well as the level of distortion in the rest of the body and face. Portraying Quasimodo in the 1911 French adaptation, *Notre Dame de Paris* (directed by Albert

²¹⁹ “Rev. of *The Hunchback*, dir. Van Dyke Brooke,” *Moving Picture World* 11 Sept. 1909: 355.

Capellani), stage actor Henry Krauss goes in a distinctly theatrical direction. The hump is not so heavily padded as to seriously inhibit movement and his facial makeup is extremely stylised and artificial. It is not meant to be a naturalistic representation of genuine deformity, but rather a painted mask that labels him as a specific type. It is strikingly reminiscent of the masks worn by performers in ancient Greek tragedies or *Commedia dell'arte*.

The 1923 Worsley/Chaney film chooses a much more literal and extreme route. Famous for his disfiguring makeup talents and for his readiness to submit to unhealthy levels of physical discomfort in the embodiment of a character, Chaney is perhaps the most visually shocking of the silent film Quasimodo incarnations. Krauss's lighter hump indicates a greater reliance on posture and choreography to create the feeling of deformity, whereas Chaney allows the makeup itself to dictate his gestural style. He wears a massive and heavily restrictive brace that contorts his entire body and limits his range of movement. Every move he makes is a struggle against the weight and limitations of the heavy prosthetic structure, much as it would be for an actual disabled individual. His facial makeup is just as extreme, with extensive prosthetic elements in the areas of the nose and cheekbones, a twisted mouth, and a blind eye.

In both cases, Quasimodo's extreme deformity is rather a mark of his victimisation than his inner evil, and true villainy lies in functionally-formed and socially accepted characters. David J. Skal draws an interesting visual parallel between the facial deformity of Chaney's Quasimodo and images of disfigured WWI veterans.²²⁰ Considering this context, Chaney's graphically realistic approach to

²²⁰ Skal, *Monster Show* 67-8.

Quasimodo's deformity may bring with it deeper symbolic connotations of self-sacrificing heroism and courage rather than simply social and emotional alienation.



Figure 53: Lon Chaney's extreme full-body makeup as Quasimodo in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Worsley, 1923). Publicity still.

It is difficult to trace the evolution of the Quasimodo/Quasimodo-esque hunchback image throughout silent film as so many films are lost. From what remains however, and from the responses elicited by the 1923 version, it appears that Chaney's creation was not typical of the Silent Era. The pre-Chaney image was visually softer and more abstractly stylised. Chaney's version is the first to meticulously reproduce Hugo's descriptions, opening the door to a more aggressively physiological approach to Quasimodo's design. The very next *Notre Dame* adaptation, a 1939 sound film featuring Charles Laughton, takes its cue from Chaney in its inclusion of grotesque but realistic facial deformity and a disablingly

large hump. This style of representation would become the template for Quasimodo representations for decades to come.

While the visual motif of the twisted back is most obviously connected to the hunchback Quasimodo, it appears in subtle and suggestive forms in other silent film monster depictions as well. In Quasimodo's case, the hump is taken directly from the original literary source (Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris*) and is his most distinctive physical feature. Extended to other literary monsters however, this feature has a different meaning when applied to their film incarnations. Although Hyde is not labeled a hunchback by Stevenson, he is often shown heavily slouched or hunch-backed, to contrast with Jekyll's upright, straight-backed posture. Murnau gives his Dracula a noticeable hunch as well (*Nosferatu*, 1922) and Wiene/Veidt's Orlac (*Orlacs Hände*, 1924) begins to hunch and slouch as the influence of the hands grows stronger. Epstein/Debucourt's Roderick Usher (*Chute de la maison Usher*, 1928) also displays a slight curvature of the shoulders, which is emphasised by the design of his costume - a possible reference to Murnau's *Nosferatu*. In all these cases, the bowed back is used as an indicator of discomfort, introversion, evil, and potential aggression.

An emphasis on a hunched back or uneven shoulders could also be calculated to subliminally evoke the stage image of Shakespeare's Richard III. It was not unusual for Shakespeare and other playwrights to use the image of a hunched back to symbolise malice. *Richard III* was likely to be particularly recognisable to Silent Era audiences. Adapted for film as early as 1912, the play was also frequently mounted on stage with high-profile actors, as in the 1920 production with John Barrymore. Incidentally, Barrymore was starring in John S. Robertson's film adaptation of *Jekyll*

and *Hyde* at the same time. Symbolically, the hunch-backed silhouette evoked the twisted nature of a villainous schemer and ruthless killer. Adding a hump to the silhouettes of characters who did not originally have this feature could be an attempt at highlighting these qualities. A cursory look at Silent Era Hydes both before and after Barrymore reveals consistent use of a distinctly stooped posture ranging from a severe slouch to a mild case of kyphosis.

V.1.3. The “Limper”

Lameness is another feature with profound cultural connotations that is frequently incorporated into the monstrous body. This aberration of mobility and gesture carries with it implications of incompleteness that are frequently exploited in literature and cinema as emblematic of hidden psychological or emotional limitations. In *The Limping Hero: Grotesques in Literature*, Peter L. Hays places fictional representations of physical disability and lameness into a broader context of social and emotional limitation and defines the motif of lameness as emblematic of a character’s other internal or invisible deficiencies. Tracing the image of the “limper” in mythological and ritual contexts, fertility/sterility concepts, and the idea of physical limitation as existential “humanness,” he also associates lameness with castration or social and emotional impotence.²²¹

According to Hays, physical disability or lameness in a character can frequently be related to a wider sense of social or emotional limitation – the inability of a character to realise his dreams or take his place within the social structure: “The

²²¹ Hays 7.

wounds of the characters to be discussed ... signify their ‘humanness’ – in existential terms, their mortality – their limited powers and abilities juxtaposed with their unlimited hopes, visions, and dreams.”²²² In Hays’s interpretation, a limited or somehow “incomplete” character may be seen as vulnerable, but also as posing a threat to society because of his frustration and feeling of inferiority and rejection. Already isolated because of their physical non-conformity, these characters have nothing to lose by lashing out at the society that shuns them, and are a dangerous, unstable element. In his catalogue of literary and mythological “limpers”, Hays splits them into three main groups. The first, “Fertility Figures,” achieve a form of rebirth after passing through a symbolic death and are connected to ancient fertility gods. The lameness of “Sterility Figures” (divided into Victims and Victimisers) is related to symbolic castration, occasionally leading them to spread more universal “blight and destruction.” The final group is “Limited Man” – more naturalistically grounded characters whose lameness epitomises their restricted and moribund environment.

In a broader sense, noticeable anomalies in gestural language (such as lameness) play an important role in silent film monster depictions, becoming a large part of the monster’s character and presentation. Aside from being indicative of an actual physical disability, in some cases gestural irregularities can hint at the monster’s underlying inability to conform to societal standards. Hays supports this idea, noting that lameness can be both literal and metaphoric and can symbolise “a social disability.” The outwardly manifested deficiency, “whether physical or psychological, is only the first in a series of injuries.”²²³ By developing an unconventional physicality for the monster, an actor can project the character’s inner

²²² Hays 125.

²²³ Hays 127.

sense of isolation and deviation even before it is revealed through his actions or words.

Deformity and/or disability as a symbol of wider limitation is vividly illustrated in silent adaptations of *Notre Dame de Paris*. Quasimodo's social and personal deficiencies are simultaneously expressed in his twisted form and features *and* his anomalous gestural style. The performance style of on-screen Quasimodos is of necessity rather exaggerated: even in cases where the prosthetic element is more subdued, the actor's posture and gestures are still dependent on an unnatural bodily configuration. The weight of the hump as well as the need to emphasise it, tends to force the actor into a slouched position with bent knees and an unsteady gait. Considering that Quasimodo is a lame hunchback in a late 15th century setting, parallels with stage representations of Shakespeare's Richard III are inevitable. Although Shakespeare's Richard is much less deformed and Quasimodo is not a villainous schemer, it must have been convenient for veteran stage actors like Henry Krauss to reference a familiar gestural shorthand developed by generations of actors playing Richard on stage. Krauss's Quasimodo even features shoulder-length hair and an uncharacteristically aristocratic costume. Shakespeare's Richard III was doubtless a useful reference point, but this image was created by a rich theatrical tradition with all the limitations and possibilities afforded by a stage. The cinematic Quasimodo had to evolve a new gestural vocabulary, and this gradual evolution is traceable throughout the numerous silent *Notre Dame* adaptations.

In his extensively detailed review of the 1911 film *Notre Dame de Paris* (starring Henry Krauss), Louis Reeves Harrison praises the film's performances concluding

that “the types are admirably chosen.”²²⁴ He is referring primarily to the overall physical ‘types’ of the actors, the light-footed, alluring Esmeralda, the “tall, scholarly and morose” Frollo, and the distorted Quasimodo, combining a twisted but powerful frame with the feral timidity of a wild animal. Harrison’s use of the term “type” however, can also be extended to the gestural types that were already developing as conventions for cinematic representations of these characters. The 1911 film still bears strong theatrical echoes in the structured distribution of its actors across a well-defined stage-like space, as well as the wide, emphatic gestures and statuesque, full-figure postures adopted by the actors themselves. Although a deeper understanding of cinematic space, framing, and choreography would refine and modify the style of these gestures, tailoring them to the needs and aesthetics of the silent film medium, the ‘types’ were already there.



Figure 54: Gestural “types” in *Notre Dame de Paris* (Pathé Frères 1911), directed by Albert Capellani. Henri Krauss as Quasimodo, Stacia Napierkowska as Esmeralda, and Claude Garry as Frollo. Lost film. Publicity still.

²²⁴ Harrison 884-5.

The 1923 Chaney film, the last and most ambitious of the silent *Hunchback* adaptations, serves well as a representative example of these types – a summary of all the experiments, explorations, and discoveries that came before. Far more ambitious in its special effects and cinematography than many of its predecessors, it nonetheless inherits the conventions established by almost two decades of cinematic *Notre Dame* adaptations. Even its new, more contorted, more naturalistic Quasimodo is an advanced variation of a familiar gestural and choreographic type.

Worsley/Chaney's Quasimodo does rely on makeup and prosthetics to a greater extent than previous iterations, but he maintains the same crumpled, crouched posture, halfway between a defensive cringe and a threatened pounce. The ever-present sense of tension and occasional feats of strength and agility he displays all hint at the incongruous physical prowess masked by his seemingly disabled body. He is constantly positioned and framed in ways that emphasise his abnormal, cumbersome shape. His jerky, awkward movement patterns clash jarringly with those of the other characters who share his frame. He frequently bisects or disrupts their more controlled trajectories or adds an asymmetrical element to otherwise balanced compositions.

Gesturally, the character of Esmeralda serves as an effective foil for Quasimodo, helping to emphasise his distortion. Her undulating dance moves, graceful gestures, and lithe figure reflect the unrestrained freedom of her spirit and lifestyle, while the stunted, contorted Quasimodo is imprisoned by the limitations of his body no less than by the confines of his bell tower. Flighty, impulsive, and very mobile, Esmeralda tends to travel a great deal within her frame. In film and stage adaptations, her magnetic feminine allure is frequently expressed through a seductive dance

sequence witnessed by Quasimodo, Frolo, and Phoebus - all three of the men destined to desire her. In most adaptations (silent and beyond), her casual gestures and movement trajectories are all infused with an element of dance.

Lameness as part of an overall mobility impairment frequently appears in silent *Jekyll and Hyde* adaptations - another feature (like dwarfism) that is introduced for its visual impact rather than from descriptions in the source. Gestural devices such as spasmodically twitching hands and fingers and a waddling, unsteady gait are employed to varying degrees by different actors. Brenon/Baggott's Hyde (1913) is depicted with severe eye-hand coordination impairments, spilling and overturning chemicals in Jekyll's laboratory and hopping about in an ape-like fashion. He knocks over anything that stands in his way, sometimes turning his back to the camera, and even tumbling out of shot in the middle of a scene. Henderson/Cruze's Hyde (1912) is just as awkward, but slightly more impishly deliberate. He grins unpleasantly while clambering clumsily onto furniture and wreaking havoc on Jekyll's possessions with the obstinacy of a particularly malicious toddler. Hyde's ludicrous gestural style becomes a signifier of moral bestiality and wickedness, externalising the concept of man's animal instincts freed from the bonds of civilisation.

For severely injured pianist Orlac (*Les Mains d'Orlac* by Maurice Renard), the disabling experience of lameness is embodied more profoundly in the hands than the legs or feet. Renard's graphic and detailed description of the mutilated hands foreshadows their role as the main locus for Orlac's physical and psychological trauma: "They had, to be sure, undergone a cruel trial. A hundred-odd stitches engloved them in a repellent reddish and violet-coloured lattice."²²⁵ Despite this

²²⁵ Renard and White 64-5.

emphasis, Renard takes care to specify that Orlac's accident has left him literally lame as well. In fact, horrifying as they appear, in the novel Orlac's Hands are initially counterbalanced by his other injuries, including a shattered right leg and a bad skull fracture that requires a complex and dangerous operation to save his life. His description after the accident hints at both his natural frailty and the crippling effects of the accident:

Stephen Orlac was a small man. He had always been frail and nervous. His well-filled-out features betrayed his weakness of character. He was still pale on account of the blood he had lost. His brow was marked by two or three gashes and, among the brown hair, the scar on the back of his head traced a vivid line. His crutches were propped against the chair; soon he would be able to manage with only a stick.²²⁶

The 1924 adaptation *Orlacs Hände* (directed by Robert Wiene and starring Conrad Veidt), dismisses all of these details including Orlac's lame leg, channeling everything into his relationship with his hands. While Renard's Orlac is scarred for life, the film leaves no visual traces of disfigurement or disability at all. Directly after the accident, Orlac's injuries are concealed by bandages. When the bandages are removed, no stitches or scars remain to show the hands' alien nature. All of his irregularity lies in his movements and the behaviour of the hands themselves, which bear no special makeup. A toned-down version of traditional Expressionist facial makeup, creates darkened shadows around Veidt's eyes, giving him a somewhat haggard, haunted look. However, the complete lack of scarring or visible disfigurements left over from the accident shifts attention away from the physical realm and into the psychological. The exaggerated, dreamlike atmosphere evoked by Veidt's gestures and the overall style of the film suggest that the image shown on

²²⁶ Renard and White 64.

screen is meant as a visual embodiment of Orlac's disturbed mind and over-strained emotional state rather than a literal representation of his damaged body.

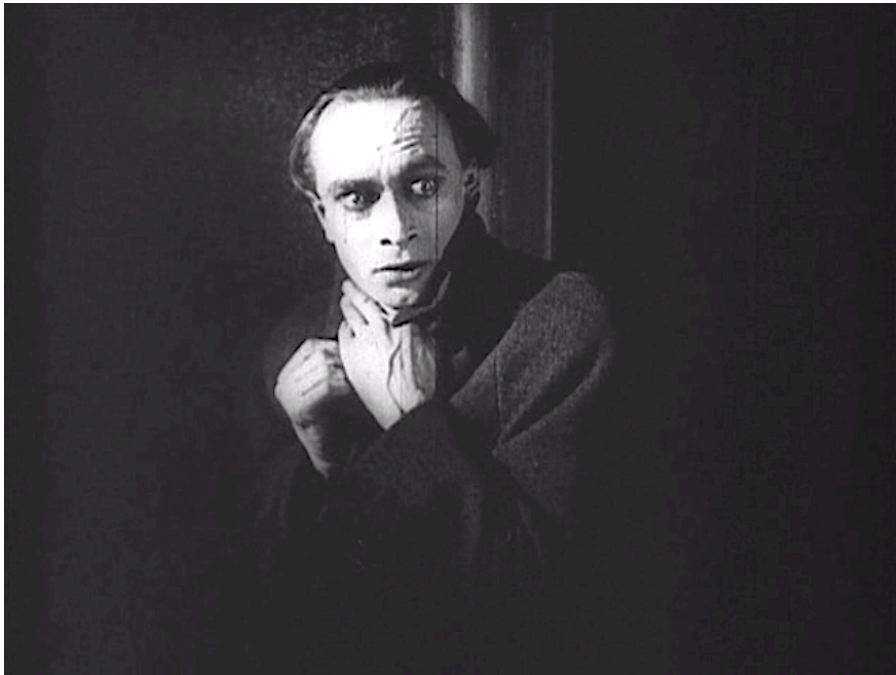


Figure 55: Expressing emotional disturbance through gesture and expression - Conrad Veidt in *Orlacs Hände* (Wiene, 1924). Screen grab taken by author.

Portraying the trauma and split personality brought on by Orlac's confusion and loss of identity, Veidt acts with his entire body, from his face to his fingertips. He is able to almost entirely disengage himself from his hands, acting two parts at the same time, and convincingly portraying paranoid fear through his face, while expressing aggression and blood lust with his hands. The somewhat extravagant, emotive style of his performance matches the dream-like nature of the art direction as well as the fanciful tone of the story. He externalises Orlac's mental torment through intensified facial expressions and psychologically charged, tense body language. Far from naturalistic, his performance is like a highly stylised dance. At the same time, he heightens the genuine emotional relateability of Orlac's struggle by interspersing his wider gestures with intimate, subtle elements, such as the slight

trembling in his fingers as he draws away from the flowers his wife hands him, or the expression of anxious doubt with which he looks at his new hands at the hospital wondering if he will ever be able to play again. His hands seem to be in constant opposition to the rest of his body. When he is standing still, they flutter nervously as if struggling to throw off his control, and when they gain possession of his mind, they pull him forward, dragging his body after them despite his resistance. The hands and their unnatural behaviour transform and define Orlac's interactions with the world and his own self-perception. They disable and monstrify him no less than a lame leg.

V.1.4. The Horrific Face: Gaping Mouths, Evil Eyes and Missing Noses

The face of the monster and its deviations are no less important in constructing a monstrous image than his overall body. This feature gains special relevance with the possibilities and demands of the cinematic close-up. Facial trauma specialist Frances Cooke Macgregor notes that the mouth in particular is strongly connected to “self-image” as “a mirror of emotions” and has many “unique social and psychological implications.”²²⁷

In *Rabelais and His World*, Mikhail Bakhtin provides a detailed and insightful analysis of the grotesque symbol of the gaping mouth as a doorway into the lower stratum, the bodily equivalent of the underworld. He also notes that it “is related to the image of swallowing, this most ancient symbol of death and destruction.”²²⁸ In Western art, countless Medieval and Renaissance representation of the devil and

²²⁷ Frances Cooke Macgregor, *Transformation and Identity: the Face and Plastic Surgery* (New York: Quadrangle, 1974) 79.

²²⁸ Bakhtin 347.

demons prominently feature large gaping mouths, in which sinners are swallowed or through which other monstrous creatures emerge. Swallowing of course, is also related to creation and rebirth in various mythological and Biblical contexts. A fascination with the mouth and its symbolically destructive or creative implications is not necessarily a universal feature of either the monster in general or the Gothic monster in particular. Nevertheless, it does play a significant role in some specific cases that should not be overlooked. The most obvious example of this is Dracula, who brings death through the medium of the mouth and the teeth (or fangs). He casts his victims into the mythological lower stratum (the state of being undead), by absorbing their essence into his own bodily lower stratum (through drinking their blood). Afterwards, they can be reborn as new vampires who will continue the same process of devouring and generating at the same time. The oversized fangs given to him in *Nosferatu* draw visual focus to the area of his mouth, highlighting its symbolic importance. Erik's "infection" of Christine's psyche in *Phantom of the Opera* also comes through the medium of the mouth. His voice plays the role of the vampire's teeth and Christine's own voice improves through contact with him. She is transformed when she is swallowed by his voice and passes through the undergrounds (lower stratum) of the Opera House. The Opera itself swallows her and casts her into its bowels.

For some monsters, the mouth becomes a vehicle for their own transformation or loss of identity. Gwynplaine (*The Man Who Laughs*) loses his face and identity through his grotesquely twisted mouth. It "devours" his true face and replaces it with a mask. It swallows him and turns him into something new, a face that does not truly represent him. Jekyll is transformed into Hyde by swallowing a potion that he has

created. The infection enters through the mouth and generates a new form as it travels through his body. The moment of swallowing is emphasised as a key scene in most silent Jekyll and Hyde adaptations.

Macgregor's discussion of the mouth in the context of transformation through plastic surgery has special relevance for Gwynplaine (*The Man Who Laughs*), and the presentation of his surgically remodelled mouth on film. Gwynplaine's injury and its representation has a profound impact on the development and perception of his character. Hugo's description of Gwynplaine is written with an almost scientific sense of precision and detail. Despite the unnatural procedures it describes its tone verges on admiration for the skill and artistry involved in remoulding a human face into a new image:

It seemed evident that a mysterious and probably occult science, which was to surgery what alchemy was to chemistry, had chiselled his flesh, evidently at a very tender age, and manufactured his countenance with premeditation. That science, clever with the knife, skilled in obtusions and ligatures, had enlarged the mouth, cut away the lips, laid bare the gums, distended the ears, cut the cartilages, displaced the eyelids and the cheeks, enlarged the zygomatic muscle, pressed the scars and cicatrices to a level, turned back the skin over the lesions whilst the face was thus stretched, from all which resulted that powerful and profound piece of sculpture, the mask, Gwynplaine.²²⁹

Another description states, "one might almost have said that Gwynplaine was that dark, dead mask of ancient comedy adjusted to the body of a living man."²³⁰ Hugo presents the creators of Gwynplaine's face as sculptors or theatrical mask makers. In a grotesque way, filmmakers can be seen as their "colleagues" in creating a face for Gwynplaine's cinematic embodiment. Just as the literary Gwynplaine's face was recreated to suit the demands of comedic performance, cinematic makeup designers had to distort and remould the face of a live actor to adapt the character for the

²²⁹ Hugo, *The Man Who Laughs* 198.

²³⁰ Hugo, *The Man Who Laughs* 202.

screen, depending on the director's and actor's interpretations of the novel. The presentation of Gwynplaine's facial distortion plays a key role in the creation and development of his character both in the literary source and in adaptations. Hugo's Gwynplaine is only slightly less disfigured than Gaston Leroux's Erik in *The Phantom of the Opera* although unlike Erik, his disfigurement is artificial. The concept of a living face that has been permanently carved into a grotesque mask of laughter poses obvious challenges for a film adaptation. This type of disfigurement potentially places the actor in a position where he is incapable of using the lower half of his face to express emotion, and is locked into a mask that he cannot remove.

Conrad Veidt, a prosthetic minimalist, chose to lessen the effect of Gwynplaine's distortion in the 1928 Leni/Veidt version, attempting to keep excessive deformity from detracting from audience identification or hindering emotive expression. His Gwynplaine is only marginally grotesque, and considerably less "freakish" than Hugo's descriptions intimate. A hidden brace holds his mouth stretched into an unnaturally wide smile that reveals a row of large false teeth, but there is no unsightly scarring, prosthetics, or other signs of interference. The top half of his face is left mobile and recognisably human. This quality is essential as Gwynplaine is a suffering romantic hero rather than a soulless villain, and the suspense of the story would hardly be as effective if his emotional responses were hindered by exaggerated distortion. Although the prominent rictus grin and oversized teeth are the most noticeable features of Veidt's Gwynplaine, he incorporates an array of more subtle effects that enhance the feeling of deformity and discomfort. His hunched shoulders and raised hands reveal a painful subconsciousness; a readiness to conceal his face at a moment's notice.



Figure 56: Conrad Veidt's makeup as Gwynplaine in *The Man Who Laughs* (Leni, 1929). Screen grab taken by author.

A wig of stiff, thick hair references his role as a clown and dark eyeliners draws attention to his light-coloured eyes without making them appear too sunken or demonic. Stylised clown makeup is applied for his stage appearances and he is sometimes shown applying it himself before a performance, creating an interplay between diegetic and non-diegetic makeup. The makeup worn by the actor to represent actual disfigurement is overlaid with makeup applied by the character in a conscious process of theatrical identity construction. The resultant sense of overlapping faces (none of which are “real”) echoes the duality and self-reflexivity inherent in Hugo’s vision of the character. In Hugo’s words, Gwynplaine “lived...with a face which did not belong to him,” masked “by his own flesh,”

because “they had affixed to him a false self.”²³¹ The film’s use of makeup in both a literal and narrative sense taps into the same themes of social and personal identity construction through appearance modification.

However, as with many literary monster characters, filmmakers trod a fine line between sympathy and repulsion in their design of the monster’s physical form. If Veidt’s makeup had elicited a reaction akin to “never had been seen so total an eclipse of humanity in a human face; never parody more complete; never had apparition more frightful grinned in nightmare; never had everything repulsive to woman been more hideously amalgamated in a man”, the actor would have had difficulties conveying the complexities of Gwynplaine’s head and heart.²³² Presenting him as a tragic romantic hero, loved, pitied, and even desired by female characters within the narrative could be hindered by a slavish reproduction of Hugo’s descriptions. Hugo could explain the inner workings of his character, allowing the reader to penetrate beyond his monstrous exterior. Film did not have that option, showing rather than telling of Gwynplaine’s thoughts and feelings, challenging the audience to relate to him despite his unavoidable outward appearance. Veidt attempted to find a balance between the character’s internal and external manifestations by lowering the shock value of his appearance and leaving room for emotive expression.

Franz Höbling’s Gwynplaine in the 1921 Herzka/Höbling film also avoids heavy disfigurement and lacks visible scars. The teeth are normal and much smaller than those used by Veidt (possibly Höbling’s own). The grin itself is not stretched out as significantly as in the Leni/Veidt version, appearing as though the top and bottom lip

²³¹ Hugo, *The Man Who Laughs* 373.

²³² Hugo, *The Man Who Laughs* 379.

have simply been cut away to reveal the teeth. No other facial features are altered.

The resulting grimace is not very reminiscent of a smile. Available stills make it difficult to tell how the effect was achieved although a hidden brace (as in

Leni/Veidt) is a likely possibility. The use of a reduced rictus leaves Höbling's face open to an even greater range of expressions. While still obviously unnatural, it can more easily express fear or sadness as most of the facial muscles are still mobile.



Figure 57: Franz Höbling (Gwynplaine), Lucienne Delacroix (Dea), and Franz Weißmüller (Ursus) in *Das Grinsende Gesicht* (Herzka, 1921). Publicity still. Copy obtained by author from the Deutsches Kinemathek, Berlin.

The subdued naturalistic makeup style favoured by both films is a departure from the highly symbolic design used on stage earlier by John Barrymore in the theatrical adaptation *Clair de Lune*. Barrymore's makeup (possibly designed by himself) is very different from any of the 1920s film versions in its almost complete rejection of

Hugo's descriptions. Publicity stills reveal that only the right half of his face was shown as disfigured. His right cheek appears to be sliced open in half of a grin, with a very prominent and ragged scar. Frontally, it doesn't look like a grin at all - only a very large gash. The left corner of his mouth is slightly down-turned but not obviously scarred. This asymmetrical composition changes the overall look from a permanent grin to a face that is split into two contrasting halves - like a theatrical mask that smiles on one side but frowns on the other. Barrymore keeps the greatest percentage of his natural face intact, while representing the two faces of Gwynplaine, his true self and "false self."

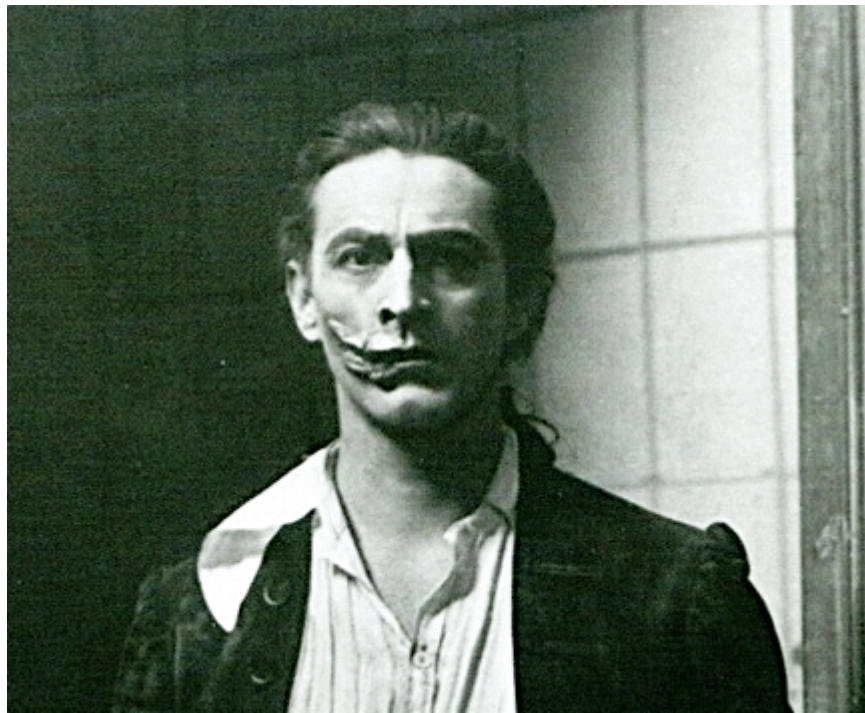


Figure 58: Publicity photo of John Barrymore's makeup as "Gwynplaine" in the play *Clair de Lune* by Michael Strange, which debuted on Broadway in 1921.

Despite William K. Everson's insistence that "closeups of [Veidt's] fearsome looking face" were "to be one of the key selling angles at the time," an analysis of the makeup choices made by Veidt, Höbling and Barrymore reveal a more complex

picture.²³³ Neither of the three 1920s versions exploits Hugo's description to its full extent as had been done in Worsley/Chaney's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1923). Their unanimous privileging of symbolic imagery and emotive capability over grotesque effects suggests that the character's dualistic nature and dramatic story were no less sellable than a fearsome image. The audience was called on to experience compassion and empathy for a complex dualistic being rather than fear and disgust for a horrifying image of deformity.

Phantom of the Opera's Erik is distinguished by his missing nose. The story behind this disturbing lack is never elucidated in Gaston Leroux's novel, leaving it unclear whether it is a birth defect or the result of injury or disease. All of the novel's descriptions of Erik's appearance are emotionally heightened, metaphorical and abstract, related by characters who are either in a state of shock or are deliberately exaggerating for dramatic effect. Doomed scene shifter Joseph Buquet frightens little ballerinas with morbid tales of a withered being with yellow skin stretched over a "dead man's skull", a nose "so little worth talking about that you can't see it side-face" and "three or four long dark locks on his forehead and behind his ears."²³⁴ The girls themselves insist that they sighted the Phantom in a hallway with "his death's head and his dress-coat."²³⁵ Most accounts also mention his unnaturally thin frame, clothed in elegantly formal opera attire. A frightened fireman contradicts all the other accounts, ranting about "a head of fire" "without a body attached to it."²³⁶ One of the opera's managers claims in his memoirs that the ghost did have a nose and that it was

²³³ Everson, *Classics* 26.

²³⁴ Gaston Leroux, *The Phantom of the Opera* (London: Collectors' Library, 2004) 17.

²³⁵ Leroux 20.

²³⁶ Leroux 17.

“long, thin and transparent” - although Leroux himself is quick to emphasise that a false nose would have looked very similar.²³⁷

Chasing Erik through a cemetery, Raoul glimpses his face only briefly before fainting in horror, (which casts some aspersions on the accuracy of his account). He repeats the frequently mentioned label of “a terrible death’s head” adding “a pair of scorching eyes” that made him feel as though he were “face to face with Satan.”²³⁸ As one of the few people to have been exposed to Erik’s face in close proximity and for a prolonged period of time, even Christine gives a vaguely horrific outline of his features. Desperately trying to convince Raoul of her victimised and pitiable position and her complete lack of affection for Erik, she describes him as a living skull with “four black holes” instead of eyes, nose and mouth, with “not a ray of light from the sockets for...you can not see his blazing eyes except in the dark.”²³⁹ Erik himself speaks of his appearance in invariably negative and hysterical tones, repeatedly referring to himself as a “corpse” and calling his face “hideous”. In the end, the unreliability of these multiple narrators leaves much to the imagination and judgment of the reader. The main connecting threads throughout these conflicting accounts include a skeletal frame, deep-set eyes and an absent nose - all suggesting congenital or acquired diseases rather than injuries and scars.

The 1916 Matray/Chrisander film may be the first direct (although unauthorised) adaptation of the novel. It is unfortunate that there are no preserved images of this film’s Phantom, as the surviving review merely describes his face as a “skull.”²⁴⁰ The reviewer does not specify whether this effect was created through the use of a

²³⁷ Leroux 40.

²³⁸ Leroux 78.

²³⁹ Leroux 150.

²⁴⁰ “Das Phantom der Oper” 13-4.

double mask, facial prosthetics, or painted effects and does not go into any detail on the extent or style of the makeup. Considering the film's fairly strict narrative adherence to its source material, it is likely that the makeup reflected Leroux's symbolic approach and was metaphoric rather than naturalistic.

Makeup design truly takes centre stage in the Julian/Chaney film - it is the main reason the film was made in the first place. Hoping to follow up on Chaney's success in 1923's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, the source material was chosen specifically to showcase his gruesome talents. Universal enthusiastically used Chaney's reputation as a marketing tool claiming that the finished look was so horrific that no images could be released until the film's official premiere.²⁴¹ Chaney's design is strongly evocative of congenital deformity, affecting the entire shape and bone structure of his face without any hints of scarring, burning or other injury detail. Following the standard set by his meticulously detailed makeup for *Hunchback*, Chaney faithfully references most of the hints and partial descriptions dispersed throughout the novel. Prosthetic padding expands and sharpens his cheekbones while artificially traced lines and shadows on the cheeks and forehead create the impression of dried, shrivelled skin. A wire holds his nose in a squashed, upturned position with nostrils flared, creating as close an approximation of a missing nose as possible without digital enhancement. A set of prominent, crooked artificial teeth, shaved eyebrows and an almost bald head complete his corpse-like image. Dark outlines around the eyes make them appear sunken and unnaturally bright at the same time. Jerrold Hogle describes the overall look as "a tuxedoed and

²⁴¹ Clarens 64-8.

diseased quasi aristocrat ... whose silhouette is strongly reminiscent of “Toulouse-Lautrec’s 1893 poster portrait of the chanteur Aristide Bruant.”²⁴²



Figure 59: Left: Headshot of actor Lon Chaney. Right: Lon Chaney as Erik in *The Phantom of the Opera* (Julian, 1925). Publicity still.

Lon Chaney’s 1925 interpretation of Erik’s face and his emphasis on the element of the missing nose, evokes the social stigma such deformities possess. Film scholar Gábor Gergely associates the missing nose with syphilis and the process of inscribing corruption on the face.²⁴³ Anna Rogava also draws this link, talking about deformity as signifier of social unacceptability - “normals” fear the disfigured Other because they read deeper moral issues into his physical image, as if the disfigured person is responsible for his condition and it is a reflection of his moral/psychological

²⁴² Hogle 143.

²⁴³ Gábor Gergely, “‘Don’t just stand there, you idiot! Come and help me find my nose!’ or The Absent Nose as Marker of Pathology in Mainstream Cinema,” (presented at the conference Sensualising Deformity: Communication and Construction of Monstrous Embodiment, University of Edinburgh, 2012).

state.²⁴⁴ The cultural connotations of the missing nose range from references to syphilis/corruption, contagion (leprosy), and decay (the loss of soft tissue in a corpse creating a skull-like aspect and turning the face into a “death’s head”). Erik is presented in the novel as a symbol of death, and bears very heavy mythic, symbolic and visual connotations of death in films as well. Gergely draws parallels between the noseless Erik and other popular literary and cinematic figures including Darth Vader (the shape of his mask suggests an absent nose, but when it is removed the nose is revealed, suggesting the possibility of redemption); Voldemort (he is corrupt by birth because of his “mudblood” heritage and is a child of sorcery and deception, he loses his nose by dabbling in the dark arts and eviscerating his soul); Francis Ford Coppola’s 1992 interpretation of *Dracula* (in which Dracula’s “true” face lacks a nose) and even *Chinatown* (1974)’s Jake Gittes (whose nose is damaged because he has come in contact with corruption and evil.)²⁴⁵

The eye area is a feature emphasised in some form in almost all monster figures (both literary and cinematic). In the original literary sources, this can range from inborn abnormalities such as unusual colouring (mentioned in relation to Frankenstein’s Creature, Erik, and Dracula) and partial blindness (Quasimodo), or a general sense of malice projected through the gaze (Hyde). It is almost impossible to convey colour abnormalities in black-and-white silent film, so film versions tend to rely on features that can be conveyed through performance or makeup. The abstract concept of the “Evil Eye” is visually constructed through the use of makeup and the actor’s facial expression - the eyes are made to appear abnormal even if it isn’t in the way described in the literary source.

²⁴⁴ Anna Rogava, “Disability and Self-Image: Reflections on Social Stigma and De-faced Body as Metaphor,” (Leuven: Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2014).

²⁴⁵ Gergely.

1923's *Hunchback of Notre Dame* illustrates a literal approach to the abnormality described in the novel. Quasimodo is blind in one eye and Lon Chaney prominently showcases this feature through the use of a large, immobile prosthetic eye. Quasimodo's limited vision is a part of his other social and personal limitations. He is not able to perceive or experience the world fully in both a metaphoric and a literal sense. The image of the Evil Eye however, hints at a different sort of aberration, indicating spiritual distortion and danger. Strong visual emphasis on the eye area can draw attention to a character's pre-existing villainous nature or gradual transformation into a monster. Leroux's *Phantom of the Opera* generally describes Erik's eyes as so deeply sunken that they appear to be empty eye sockets, enhancing his emaciated, death-like visage. While Chaney follows Leroux's descriptions closely in his makeup for the 1925 film, he digresses in his design of the eyes. The heavy, dark outlines below the rims of his eyelids make the eyes appear larger and more manic - reminiscent of the Satanic gleam described by Raoul rather than the seemingly empty sockets noted by other characters. This is a purely cinematic concession, giving Chaney at least one mobile, emotive feature on a face immobilised by wires and prosthetics. The prominently featured eyes endow Chaney's Erik with a wild, demonic stare and at the same time a glimmer of humanity that makes him more than just a living skull.

In 1912's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, the intelligent, alert gaze of James Cruze's Jekyll is converted into Hyde's maniacal, barely human stare by deep shadows, thick eyeliner and a mechanical widening of the eyes. The Evil Eye device is used frequently in *Jekyll and Hyde* films to signal the completion of a transformation

sequence. Beginning with convulsing hands, the transformation finishes when Hyde lifts his gaze to the camera.

V.2. The Symbolism of Monstrous Deformity

The cultural symbols used by filmmakers in the creation of monsters were calculated not only towards evoking emotional reactions from viewers, but also to present the monster under a specific angle as a criminal, a genius, a superhuman being, a freak, or a foreigner.

V.2.1. The Deformed Monster as Criminal/Villain

Any discussion of methods for visually constructing and presenting monstrosity inevitably raises the issue of the perceived link between physical aberration and spiritual evil. Some of the novels and all of the films covered in this thesis were created after the publication of Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso's books on eugenics.²⁴⁶ Discussing Albert Basserman's transformation into the Hyde-like "Other" in *Der Andere* (Max Mack, 1913), Paul Cowan notes strong parallels with the "criminal type" described by Lombroso.²⁴⁷ Both *Der Andere* and 1914's *Ein Seltsamer Fall (A Strange Case)*, directed by Max Mack and starring Alwin Neuss) use makeup techniques and facial contortion to mimic physical characteristics described in criminology, eugenics, physiognomy, psychology, and degeneracy studies of the late 1800s.²⁴⁸ A belief in the relationship between and individual's

²⁴⁶ Lombroso *Criminal*.

²⁴⁷ Paul Cowan, "Theater and Cinema in the 'Age of Nervousness': *Der Andere* by Paul Lindau (1894) and Max Mack (1913)," *Cinema & Cie International Film Studies Journal* Fall 2004: 65–71.

²⁴⁸ Lombroso, *Criminal and Genius*; Talbot; and Galton, *Hereditary Genius*.

facial features and his/her moral and spiritual potential was actively reflected in turn-of-the-century mystery/crime, adventure, Gothic and supernatural literature as well as in film. Although Alwin Neuss's first portrayal of Hyde in 1910's *Den Skaebnesvangre Opfindelse* (*The Fateful Invention*, directed by August Blom) is fancifully simian, his 1914 version follows Basserman's lead using makeup and facial expressions to recreate the stereotypical criminal type. This interpretation presents Hyde as an inborn human criminal and moral degenerate rather than an animalistic image of devolution.

Comparing Bram Stoker's first full description of Dracula with early criminology studies, David Skal points out that Dracula's "physiognomy" is also "consistent with the Victorian age's concept of the 'criminal type'...almost a verbatim reiteration of characteristics that could be found in criminology textbooks."²⁴⁹ Stoker's alignment of his descriptions with criminology studies would soon be embraced by film adaptations as well.

Of all the features described by Lombroso, the moral conflict between symmetry and asymmetry would become one of the most frequently employed in cinematic monster images. This is not surprising, considering the deep connotations of symmetry in art, architecture and biology. Physical imbalance has had profound significance in discourses on the grotesque, as it is seen as a deviation from divine harmony – it does not deserve compassion as it is immoral and ungodly – physical deviation in the context of the grotesque has not simply aesthetic but also moral and spiritual connotations.

²⁴⁹ Skal, *Hollywood Gothic* 51.

Numerous theories of the grotesque developed from the struggle between Vitruvianism and anti-Vitruvianism/classicism and anti-classicism. The concept of the grotesque acquired highly subjective dimensions with each theory/period using it as a negative label for anything that did not conform to accepted standards of beauty and perfection. In a wider sense, the grotesque has frequently been taken to signify anything that is distorted or wrong and the application of the term varied widely depending on attitudes of the time. Any desire to embrace the grotesque, as in Gothic literature and especially in the writings of Victor Hugo, had to embrace the dark and macabre connotations of the term as well, using it to rebel against traditional modes of expression and the conventions of classicism (romantic anti-classicism). Most discussions of the grotesque harked back to the moral/spiritual implications introduced by Vitruvius, with the grotesque representing the odd, the rejected, the deformed, and the Other. In this context, especially from the Vitruvian perspective, the monster's deformity and his inherent potential for evil are inextricable. Since the Christianised Vitruvian ideal of absolute mathematical harmony places God at the centre of a perfect geometric universe, anything that steps outside these boundaries is evil by definition.

In his critique of Roman art, Vitruvius insists that "The ancients" painted "imitations based upon reality," while the Romans painted "monsters rather than definite representations taken from definite things."²⁵⁰ He is speaking specifically of the grotesque, but his use of the term "monster" in this context is natural and unsurprising. The monster is always unbalanced, imperfect, and frequently geometrically objectionable. According to Vitruvius (as interpreted by Renaissance

²⁵⁰ Vitruvius Pollio, *On Architecture*, trans. Frank Granger (London: W. Heinemann, 1931).

theorists), the unfortunate monsters he speaks of are undefined, vulgar, irrational, and ungodly. If they have no place in the balanced, Christian world created by God, what choice do they have but to turn to the Devil, who has presumably created them?

Taking Vitruvius's line of reasoning to its logical conclusion, the monster *is* the Devil, or is at least *of* the Devil. Christian iconography and symbolism seem to have reached this conclusion as well. In medieval cathedral sculpture, tomb effigies, paintings, illuminated manuscripts, mysteries, diableries - in short, anywhere the Devil and his minions are visualised - they display classic grotesque *and* monstrous features.

With centuries of examples to draw from, the newly created film medium organically turned to the same sources and conventions in visualising its own demons. Hence, the vision of Mephisto created in Murnau's *Faust* is a classic grotesque monster-demon: he is enormous in size, a hybrid of incompatible animal parts (a human form with wings and horns), visually references death and decay (through the dark clouds of contagion that he emits), and is filmed in a mythically monumental way that shows him as an unrestrained force of nature.

Bernard McElroy suggests that such depictions as the distorted, hideous faces in Hieronymus Bosch's *Christ Carrying the Cross* (1515-1516) imply, on a moral level, the existence of a world that is capable of producing such monstrosity and aberration. They are also a potent reminder of "the undignified, perilous, even gross physicality of existence."²⁵¹ The image of a severely deformed human being is especially compelling and repulsive because it is still recognisable as something akin to the Self, rather than an alien creature from a parallel reality. It is mainly from this area of

²⁵¹ Bernard McElroy, *Fiction of the Modern Grotesque* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989) 11-2.

the grotesque that the Gothic monster draws his power and his fascination, especially when he crosses over into visual representation. The moral implications of the monster's deformity, and the degree to which it is exploited in film, hark back to the Vitruvian model of perfect geometry and universal structural balance.

George Santayana's 19th century exposition of the grotesque takes a surprisingly more tolerant approach, suggesting that there is more than one possible response to the grotesque object. On a shallower level, it can be considered for its "distortion of an ideal type," but it can also be seen for its internal potential. Although it may be "the half-formed, the perplexed, and the suggestively monstrous," one may still find "an inkling of the unity and character in the midst of the strangeness of the form." This deeper level of insight can potentially end the initial confusion caused by the outward appearance of the grotesque and cause the observer to fundamentally reevaluate his/her categories.²⁵²

The monster narrative (in both its literary and cinematic form) incorporates elements of both attitudes. The deformed monster is shunned not only because his appearance is in itself repulsive, but because of the potential for evil it is taken to represent. Whether this potential is realised or not varies from monster to monster, but the assumption is always there, affecting every aspect of the monster's interactions with society. At the same time, there is also the potential for sympathy, noble aspiration, and the yearning to transcend the limitations of nature.

The filmic image can create a curious synthesis of these two conflicting approaches through a combination of cinematic techniques. Cinematic representation presents the monster's physical deformity in full force, allowing the viewer to form

²⁵² George Santayana, "The Grotesque," *The Sense of Beauty* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1896) 256–8.

an instant subjective judgment based purely on appearance. Extravagant makeup and costume design, body language, and cinematography can push this judgment even further. The repulsion or fear that the viewer may experience is frequently echoed by other characters in the film, who may recoil, show aggression, or laugh derisively at the sight of the monster, ostensibly directing the viewer's response as well. The lingering close-up of Christine's horrified expression on first seeing Erik (Lon Chaney)'s disfigured face in *Phantom of the Opera* (Julian 1925), the aggression of the crowd towards the unfortunate hunchback Quasimodo in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Worsley 1923), and the taunting laughter that fills the House of Lords at the sight of Gwynplaine (Conrad Veidt)'s distorted grin in *The Man Who Laughs* (Leni 1928) all act as vivid illustrations of the basic appearance-based response. The justification for these reactions stems directly from the Vitruvian connection between physical imperfection and moral impropriety; if the subject deviates from aesthetic norms, it is both necessary and proper that he should be destroyed or at least ridiculed, because he is innately evil and immoral. In Robertson/Barrymore's *Jekyll and Hyde*, the connection between the two halves of the monster is literally mapped onto Hyde's body, again echoing Dorian Gray's portrait. As Hyde's evil influence and strength increase, he begins to grow slightly more deformed with each appearance, the back of his head elongating into a bizarre cone-shape, echoing the growing distortion of Jekyll's conscience and soul. His evil disrupts the biological symmetry of his body.

Resisting the appearance-based response, S.S. Prawer energetically condemns badly-made "terror films" that "indulge in facile equations of bodily deformity with deformity of mind and soul, or allow some bone-headed 'hero' an all-too-easy

victory over a ‘mad’ scientist, or habitually associate criminality with a liking for books and objets d’art).”²⁵³ Rosemarie Garland-Thomson agrees that “the physically disabled figure” has become “the modernist gargoyle” and is commonly used as “a metaphor for depravity, despair, and perversion. Depoliticised and aestheticized by the authoritative critical frame of the grotesque, the disabled body is perpetually read as a sign for a degenerate soul and a bankrupt universe.”²⁵⁴

While reinforcing the external surface of the body and its appearance, film has the ability to simultaneously penetrate *beyond* the surface and reveal the inner potential of a character, in the sense described by Santayana. Strategic close-ups, suggestive editing, and thoughtful lighting and compositional decisions can force the viewer to reevaluate his/her initial impression and see the monster in a new light through an understanding of his inner states. This type of simultaneous representation is evident in the House of Lords sequence in *The Man Who Laughs*, mentioned earlier. Superficially, the laughter of the surrounding Lords and the exaggerated effect of Gwynplaine’s prosthetic makeup seem to invite the viewer’s scorn, but the style in which the sequence is presented reveals a deeper layer. Wide, high-angled POV shots from Gwynplaine’s perspective show the Lords as a teeming mass of indiscriminate laughing faces and pointing fingers, while extreme close-ups of his eyes draw the focus away from his deformity and towards the painful feelings of rejection and disillusionment that he is experiencing. These techniques serve to alienate the viewer from the prejudiced crowd and connect with the suffering of the monster himself, all but invalidating the external effect of his deformity.

²⁵³ Praver, *Caligari’s Children* 280.

²⁵⁴ Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997) 112.

Through his obvious physical deviance, the monster figure frequently becomes a repository for a menagerie of negative racial, social, medical, ethnic and psychological stereotypes. Regardless of his real ethnic origin, he is always the Other, the foreigner. Repeating Skal's classification of the literary Dracula as the Victorian "criminal type," Halberstam also connects his description to anti-Semitic stereotypes, and expounds at length on the presence of religious and foreign stereotypes in Gothic literature.²⁵⁵ The stereotype of foreignness as dangerous/evil is pervasive in 19th century literature in general and this reflects strongly in monster narratives. In Leroux's *Phantom of the Opera*, the main snatches of information provided on Erik's past relate to his time in Persia and his relationship with the mysterious Persian himself. This emphasis on the exotic and dangerous elements of Erik's past temporarily admits the assumption that he is himself a foreigner and perhaps even a Muslim. The image of a secretive, possibly supernatural and overtly un-Christian figure invading civilised modern society from an exotic foreign land is a clear reference to *Dracula*'s vampiric Romanian count, introduced to audiences only a decade earlier. The parallel is heightened by their shared ability to influence pure but susceptible young women lacking strong father figures.

Considering the significance of themes of exoticism, racism and foreignness to Leroux's novel, it is surprising that these themes are usually discarded in the transfer to film, even in the earliest adaptations. This is particularly noticeable in the treatment of Erik's name. Although the name itself is not unusual, Christine quickly draws the reader's attention to the fact that the Phantom chooses to pronounce it as *Erik* rather than the more French-sounding *Erique*. She identifies it as not merely a

²⁵⁵ Halberstam 14.

foreign version of a common name, but specifically as a Scandinavian or Germanic variant. Both options are rich with implications for the personal relationship between the two characters and for Erik's potential origin. Erik himself hints that this may not be his real name at all, but if he is French (as is later revealed) why would he deliberately chose a Germanic-sounding name? What associations did Leroux mean to evoke in a novel written only four years before the outbreak of the First World War? Interestingly none of the adaptations, even those produced in the years adjacent to the two World Wars, make any effort to address the issue of his name as either foreign-sounding or as an alias. Either its ambiguous and provocative nature is ignored or the name is replaced by one that is culturally relevant to the chosen setting. The Lubin/Rains film even "Frenchifies" it and adds a respectable French surname, calling him Eriq Claude. In this case, it is likely that the name change relates directly to the film's sympathetic approach to the Phantom. It might have been deemed difficult for American and European audiences to commiserate with a Germanic-sounding character in 1943.

Leroux however, had no qualms about spreading misleading hints on Erik's background. He briefly toys with racial implications as well, emphasising Erik's black mask and paralleling him with the character of Othello as he and Christine sing a duet from the opera. This suggestion is soon discarded as well as references to albinism and syphilis, which are also left unconfirmed. In fact, Leroux makes an effort to conflate every negative stereotype recognisable at the time from racial, ethnic, genetic, medical and psychological fields. These hints inform the idea that to those who see him, Erik literally embodies everything that is most vile and unacceptable. As cultural and historical attitudes change, the symbols of evil and

danger evolve as well, reflecting in the features emphasised by various literary monster adaptations. To generalise greatly but not inaccurately, the monster becomes whatever is most frightening and socially and morally deviant/threatening at the time of his cinematic representation.

V.2.2. The Deformed Monster as Genius/Superman

Taken a step further, the approaches described above can easily stretch to equate any physical abnormality, and by extension disability, with the presence of evil or malicious tendencies. In fact, representations of the disabled body as a source of threat are pervasive in literature, art, and film, giving rise to such terms as “Supercrip”, “Evil Crip”, and “Evil Avenger”. In these contexts, the crippled or malformed body is used as a metaphor for a malevolent nature, strongly implying that the individual in question is obsessed with taking vengeance on an ambivalent, healthy society or whoever he holds responsible for his misfortune. Cast as almost unequivocal villains, these characters are often portrayed as struggling to triumph over their condition by developing other extraordinary abilities.²⁵⁶ Such modes of representation existed already in Silent Era cinema. The idea of the crippled but unnaturally skilful body is invoked by Lon Chaney’s Quasimodo, using his extraordinary acrobatic skills to taunt the jeering crowd below. However, he does not fully fit the stereotype of the “Supercrip”, as he is not shown as developing these skills in order to inflict any sort of harm or to exact vengeance.

²⁵⁶ For more on representations of disability in the media see Dahl; Hartnett 21-9; and Norden 125-44.

Cesare Lombroso draws a strong link between genius and insanity in his 1888 work *The Man of Genius*. He lists a range of physical manifestations that are connected to both and are also signs of degeneration. These include: smallness of stature, extreme pallor, emaciation, an unusual luminosity of the eyes, muscular weakness, apathy, and sickliness, sterility, left-handedness, obliviousness to the outside world during the process of creation, a tendency towards bi-polar behaviour, an unusually rapid pulse, and a feverish head. He also mentions somnambulism, instinctiveness, full submersion into the unconscious, all-consuming random bouts of inspiration and hysterical levels of sensitivity.²⁵⁷

The representation of Roderick Usher's human form in film shows traces of these wider contemporary cultural influences. It is curious how closely some of the terms used by Poe in the original story correspond with the much later writings of Lombroso. Almost all of the above-listed qualities are either stated or implied throughout Poe's descriptions of Roderick's appearance and behaviour. Poe also links the Usher family's "peculiar sensibility of temperament" with their propensity to create "works of exalted art."²⁵⁸ Roderick himself displays remarkable abilities as a painter, musician, and poet creating extraordinary works while in a state of "intense mental collectedness", paralleling the traits of the insane genius delineated by Lombroso. The implication of degeneration is present in references to the Usher family's ancient lineage, limited issue, and the physical and mental condition of the current heirs. The fragile health of the last two Ushers, neither of whom is married or even socially active, potential allusions to incest, and Roderick's own insistence that

²⁵⁷ Lombroso *Genius*.

²⁵⁸ Poe, *Usher* 5.

he is destined to be the last of his line all contribute to this context. In fact, images of degeneration and decay permeate the story and are among its main themes.

Writing *Usher* in 1839, Poe would not have been directly exposed to the explorations of eugenics, physiognomy, psychology, and degeneracy propounded by Galton, Lombroso, and Talbot. However, these ideas, which gained popularity at the turn of the century, were based on a range of earlier theories and reflect a long-standing tradition of social and literary approaches to these subjects. Seen in the context of early 20th century film adaptations of Poe's work, almost contemporary to these studies, the theories they present gain an additional level of relevance. Variations on these fashionable ideas are omnipresent in late nineteenth and early twentieth century popular culture, from novels and detective stories, to newspaper cartoons, to theatrical productions and, of course, films. Filmmakers' awareness of the fundamental principles of these studies is evident in the aesthetic choices made in various *Jekyll and Hyde* adaptations as well as a menagerie of cinematic representations of irredeemable criminals and mad geniuses.

The superhuman musical talents of Erik in *Phantom of the Opera* are another example of the perceived link between deformity/disability and innate genius. Lombroso only hints at this link, while Erving Goffman directly addresses the attribution of extraordinary qualities to the disfigured as a part of his "stigma theory."²⁵⁹ Seen through the lens of Goffman's theory, the literary Erik's unique musical and engineering abilities stem directly from his physical deficiencies. Giving voice to this belief, Leroux's Persian straightforwardly states that Erik's extreme talents are nature's compensation for his hideous face. He sings "as nobody on this

²⁵⁹ Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963) 15.

earth had ever sung before,” he plays the violin, piano and organ, he is a spectacular engineer and illusionist, a ventriloquist and clearly a very good teacher.²⁶⁰ Everyone who hears his voice, from Christine to Raoul (who hates and fears him) are entranced and seduced by its angelic beauty. Leroux draws a very harsh contrast between Erik’s unbearably hideous face and the angelic beauty of his voice, associating his appearance with death, decay, evil and the underworld and his voice with angels, heaven and beauty. When Christine hears him play his composition “Don Juan Triumphant”, she is overcome with emotion and calls him “sublime” - a very apt term as he combines the divinely beautiful and the horrifying and dark.

Erik’s talents are repeatedly emphasised across adaptations, even those that deviate significantly from Leroux in other plot points. *Phantom of the Violin* (1914)’s Ellis is a violinist and composer who enthralls his wife, Rosa, with the power of his music. In the German 1916 Matray/Chrisander adaptation, Erik sings, plays the organ, teaches Christine, and also happens to be the true original designer of the Paris Opera House, shunned because of his ugliness. Chaney’s Erik (*The Phantom of the Opera*, 1925), does not appear to sing and his engineering skills are not mentioned, but he is shown playing the organ and violin as well as teaching Christine to sing. It is repeatedly emphasised that the music he creates is mesmerising in its beauty.

In the novel, Erik’s voice is an incredibly significant facet of his talents as the only part of his natural form that is truly beautiful. Everything that has been taken away from his face has gone into his enthralling, superhuman voice and it is the main tool with which he hypnotises or disables other characters - Christine is irresistibly

²⁶⁰ Leroux “Epilogue” 5.

drawn to him and even his enemies, like Raoul, are rendered helpless by its power. In silent versions, this feature is inevitably lost - how can it be replaced and what does this do to Erik's image? In *Violin*, Ellis's gift lies primarily in his violin playing, which would of course be shown visually - it is an alternate way of portraying his talent in a physical way. It would be intriguing to find out whether the film involved some sort of violin accompaniment at some screenings and/or whether a specific piece of music was written to represent the song Ellis plays to Rosa and which she later burlesques, but extant reviews do not mention such musical supplementation. Chaney replaces Erik's singing with a dance-like style of movement, trying to convey his musicality and the gentle beauty of his voice through the subtle elegance of his movements. Again he keeps Erik's talent in a physical realm, showing that there is something beautiful that is a natural part of Erik as an entity and that can be conveyed visually. The Lubin/Rains version is a sound film, so Rains does have the potential to use his voice, but he does not sing. Continuing the tradition laid down by the silent adaptations, Rains's Erique focuses on beautiful violin playing rather than singing. He is given a signature tune - his own musical motif - that is connected to Christine's childhood. Although the geography has been altered this move draws a direct connection with the novel. Claudin uses the tune because he comes from the same region as Christine (and because he was originally meant to be Christine's father) while Leroux's Erik uses Christine's father's favourite tune to convince her he is the Angel of Music. (It is never really specified how he knew the tune and Christine's relationship with it.)

V.2.3. Deformity as Spectacle: “Freakery”

The freak show was a popular form of entertainment at the turn of the century and was a large part of the cultural context in which silent monster films were created. In his book on monsters in film, Denis Gifford traces the roots of cinema itself to the freak show: "cinema was born on the fairground sideshow; the horror film is the modern version of the freak tent. Where once we paid to gape at living freaks, now we pay to gape at fake ones, the monsters of the movies."²⁶¹

Quasimodo's acrobatic exhibition in 1923's *Hunchback of Notre Dame* and James Cruze's Hyde gleefully parading his distorted features before the camera in the 1912 adaptation of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* all raise inevitable parallels with freak show exhibitionism.

Various studies, including the publications of Rosemarie Garland-Thompson and Robert Bogdan, have been made on the ethics, patterns, and categorisations of the freak show and its denizens. Some of these studies can provide useful insights into the portrayal of the cinematic monster. Film is a form of exhibition after all and every monster bears elements of the freak, representing a significant aberration from normality. In her study of “freakery”, Garland-Thompson in fact equates the terms “monster” and “freak” as two names for the same concept.²⁶²

Bogdan outlines two main modes for the exhibition of freaks – the Exotic Mode and the Aggrandized Mode. The Exotic mode represented a human exhibit in a way “that appealed to people's interest in the culturally strange, the primitive, the bestial, the exotic.” This mode included both disabled and “normal” individuals and emphasised their foreign origin and exotic behavioural patterns. The Aggrandised

²⁶¹ Gifford, *Movie Monsters* 134.

²⁶² See Garland-Thomson, *Freakery and Extraordinary Bodies*.

Mode artificially elevated the social background of a disabled individual, flaunting a title such as “Prince”, “Duke”, or “Countess” and making a spectacle of the individual’s ability to participate in sophisticated activities such as singing, playing musical instruments, or writing poetry, seemingly unhindered by his or her obvious disability.²⁶³

Traces of these representational models are present in silent monster films, but it would be reductive to label them filmed freak shows. The literary roots of these characters, even those directly affiliated with freak show contexts such as Gwynplaine (*The Man Who Laughs*) and Erik (*The Phantom of the Opera*), demand that they be presented on a more emotionally sophisticated level. Quasimodo’s deformity may be exploited for visual effect, but the audience is also shown his unrequited love and his noble nature. Chaney’s Erik parades himself publicly in a grotesque mask and a crimson cloak, but he is not the seemingly well-adjusted freak of the Aggrandised Mode. He is embittered by his disfigurement and the hostility it engenders and commits desperate acts in an attempt to achieve love and acceptance. The flamboyant hideousness of Hyde, a reflection of Jekyll’s innermost soul, is Jekyll’s greatest fear and disgrace. While one may be amused or repelled by Hyde’s aggressive antics, the feeling is always tinged with genuine fear – the understanding that this is not an external Other to observe from a safe distance, but a diseased fragment of the Self that is always there. Perhaps that is the main distinction between the presentation of the silent film monster and the sideshow freak. Both may amuse or shock to a certain degree, but only one truly has the power to make one question one’s own normalcy by merging Self and Other in a single image.

²⁶³ See Bogdan, *Freak Show* and “The Social Construction of Freaks” 23-37.

The central special effect in all *Hunchback* adaptations is the grotesque figure of Quasimodo himself. The fact that his condition is medical rather than supernatural, and that he does not consciously use it as a theatrical device in the ways that Erik and Gwynplaine do, creates a special dilemma for cinematic representations. It is practically impossible to showcase this kind of character without stepping close to the boundaries of exploitative exhibitionism. Erik and Gwynplaine are both performers, and any cinematic effect that intensifies the shock value of their physical images can be seen as supporting and enhancing their efforts. As the literary Quasimodo is emphatically *not* an exhibitionistic performer, benefitting from his deformity, does giving him the same sort of treatment in film undermine his integrity as a character?

The 1923 Lon Chaney version attempts to deal with this dilemma through the use of special effects. A meticulously orchestrated stunt sequence early on in the film shows Quasimodo nimbly descending the façade of the cathedral in front of a crowd of watching Parisians. He demonstrates impressive feats of balance and agility as he hops nimbly from gargoyle to gargoyle, sliding down architectural elements and swinging by his arms from protruding waterspouts. He is fully aware of his audience and turns on them defiantly before every jump, sticking out his tongue at them and responding to their jeers. The scene is elaborately constructed, intercutting between bird's-eye-views of the crowd, long shots and close-ups of Quasimodo's acrobatics, and even a composited shot where he is seen dangling hundreds of feet above the tiny people in the square below. The overall effect is very impressive and entertaining but it also plays a very important role in establishing the character of Quasimodo for the rest of the film. Since the cinematic Quasimodo has nowhere to

hide from the prying eyes of the audience, he must choose between being passively victimised by the gaze or becoming an attraction. By responding actively to the jeers of the Parisian crowd and deliberately making a spectacle of himself he *demand*s attention, absolving the audience of any potential voyeuristic guilt.

In expressing conceptual approaches to Erik's deformity through the use of makeup, film versions of *The Phantom of the Opera* also walk a fine line between exhibitionism, alienation and pathos. In the novel itself, Erik deliberately presents himself in a very theatrical and spectacular way, revealing his deformed face and exploiting its shock value to frighten away intruders or blackmail the Opera's managers into paying him. At the same time, he is physically and psychologically ill and is emotionally tormented by his inability to communicate naturally with other human beings. Visually acknowledging the medical reality of his deformity and presenting it as more physiologically conceivable can draw more attention to his physical human form and make his suffering more visceral and poignant. At the same time, it can serve as a distancing device by aligning the audience with the film's more attractive and "normal" characters and isolating Erik as a psychopathic "freak" whose criminal actions relate directly to his abnormal physical appearance. The stylistic choices made strongly affect whether Erik is presented as a soulless symbol of evil and death or an afflicted human being who is traumatised but not necessarily defined by his face.

In the original novel, Leroux does hint at Erik's fairground past, linking him with the idea of the freak show and the display of physical abnormality. Erik's self-presentation can be interpreted through the medium of existing theories of Freakery. He takes on the trappings of the freak show voluntarily, presenting himself as an

exotic specimen (as in Bogdan's Aggrandised mode) through his use of costume. Leroux pushes this element further by connecting him with exotic foreign lands (like Persia) and mentioning his use of a black mask and associating it with Othello (racial exoticism was very common in turn-of-the-century freak shows). Leroux takes on the role of a freak show proprietor, attaching an exotic backstory to his "freak" and playing up his deformity for spectacular effect. There is great emphasis on his musical and creative talents, which is reminiscent of sideshow dwarves singing opera and armless wonders painting and playing the violin with their feet. Erik also verbally mystifies and aggrandises himself, repeatedly describing himself as a ghost or spirit or even Death itself. He raises himself above the level of mundane physical insufficiency or disease, much in the same way as freak show proprietors did with ill and deformed people, insisting that their abnormalities were not medical but rather indications of mystical origin, special powers or other unrelated qualities.

The representation of the cinematic monster using methods established in the freak show is partially grounded in the realm of the comical grotesque. According to Philip J. Thomson, hyperbolism is one of the trademarks of the grotesque, often expressed in the form of "ludicrous exaggeration" in a comical rather than hideous or menacing sense.²⁶⁴ This approach denigrates the term's darker and more threatening aspects, distancing it from straightforward monstrosity. Attempting to rebuild the bridge between the grotesque and the monstrous, Victor Hugo praised the richness and variety of the grotesque "in the comic, the horrible and the ugly...compared to the narrow confines of the beautiful and sublime."²⁶⁵ It is indicative that Hugo still

²⁶⁴ For a discussion of the comical grotesque see Philip J Thomson, *The Grotesque* (London: Methuen, 1972) 13-9.

²⁶⁵ Victor Hugo, "Préface de 'Cromwell,'" *Theatre Complet*, ed. J. J. Thierry and J. Meleze (Paris: Bibliotheque de la Pleiade, 1964).

includes the comic even as he acknowledges the horrible and the ugly. Hugo's own monsters, particularly Quasimodo and Gwynplaine are the ultimate embodiments of this type of grotesque, and both are placed in positions where the response to their freakish deformity alternates between fear and ridicule.

Silent film displays a special partiality for the perversely comedic exaggeration of the monster, highlighting his relationship with the grotesque. Pure visualisation, especially without the aid of spoken dialogue, can draw attention to certain qualities that are less directly obvious in a literary work. While the filmic image can confront us with a deformed monster's hideousness in a more immediate way than a written description, it can also swerve into the other extreme and make him appear laughable. Robert Louis Stevenson's vaguely ominous description of Hyde makes him more of a fearful, immaterial shadow than a physical presence - an obvious embodiment of evil. James Cruze's embodiment of Hyde in the 1912 film however, provokes a somewhat more conflicted response. The image of the dignified Cruze lumbering across the screen with bulging eyes and enormous false teeth while shredding parts of the set and props is unavoidably comic. The humorous exaggeration of Hyde's gestural awkwardness and physical appearance contrasts sharply with the film's overall didactic and even tragic tone. This irreconcilable combination creates an ambivalent response - one of the staples of the grotesque.

Focusing on *Frankenstein* adaptations, James Heffernan describes cinema's ability to make the audience face the monster's repulsiveness in a way that literature never can.²⁶⁶ As noted above, such a visceral and immediate presentation of the monster figure can cause a multifaceted and sometimes unintentional response - the

²⁶⁶ James A. W. Heffernan, "Looking at the Monster: *Frankenstein* and Film," *Critical Inquiry* Autumn 1997: 133-58.

monster can frighten or disgust, but he can also provoke laughter, sympathy, and even admiration. Highlighting the underlying attractions of monstrosity, McElroy identifies “the source of the grotesque in art and literature” in “man’s capacity for finding a unique and powerful fascination in the monstrous. The psychic reasons for this proclivity are far from clear, but the proclivity itself has left its mark on a wide variety of cultures.”²⁶⁷

Unlike McElroy, Daniel A. Forbes does attempt to clarify “the psychic reasons for this proclivity,” referring to the effect as “the aesthetic of evil.” In his article in *Vader, Voldemort and other Villains: Essays on Evil in Popular Media*, he explains that villainous characters are frequently perceived as “cool” or interesting. Examining this phenomenon, he asks why we are drawn to antagonistic characters even though their moral standards are supposedly unacceptable and they are destined to be defeated in the context of the narrative. Forbes’s response to this dilemma lies in the process of identifying the Self with the image of the Other - the villain/monster is not simply a foil for the “good” characters, he represents an opposing perspective that forces us to reexamine our own values and beliefs. He expands this idea to say that the battle between good and evil in fictional narratives echoes the interplay between stability and danger within our own world. “Evil” can simultaneously symbolise a dangerous threat and the adventure of examining an alternative viewpoint.²⁶⁸ A similar dynamic can occur within the narrative fabric as well. For example, in *Phantom of the Opera*, Christine is torn between the more traditional and perhaps stable option offered by Raoul and adventurous, unfamiliar options offered

²⁶⁷ McElroy 1.

²⁶⁸ Daniel A. Forbes, “The Aesthetic of Evil,” *Vader, Voldemort and other Villains: Essays on Evil in Popular Media*, ed. Jamey Heit (London: McFarland, 2011) 13–27.

by Erik. Through its presentation of Erik's character and physical image, a film can challenge the audience to share Christine's dilemma vicariously.

Thomson offers a darker yet more suggestively immersive perspective on the appeal of abnormal, evil or grotesque imagery. He remarks on the affinity of the grotesque, not simply with physical abnormality, but with the distortion or destruction of the human body in particular. Like Forbes, he suggests that the mixed response it elicits stems from a fear of self-knowledge as much as from a fear of the Other. He adds that beyond the confusion caused by the strange and the unfamiliar, there lurks a clash between the viewer's civilised conditioning (straightforward horror at the image presented), and a subconscious sadistic impulse (laughter as an expression of "unholy glee and barbaric delight" at encountering something "physically cruel, abnormal or obscene").²⁶⁹ As the viewer consciously recoils from the grotesque, he/she simultaneously takes on some of its qualities and subconsciously recognises the newfound kinship.

V.2.4. Deformity as Signifier of Sexual Deviance

The theme of certain types of disability/deformity as indicative of corruption and infection strongly informs views of the monster's sexuality and reproductive abilities. This discourse labels the disabled/disfigured person as a subject meant to excite disgust rather than desire. The disabled/disfigured individual is branded as undesirable for reproduction (even if the disability itself is not congenital) or as a completely asexual organism who is either incapable of sexual/reproductive activity

²⁶⁹ Thomson 8-9.

or not entitled to engage in such activity. Leslie Fiedler expands this discussion to the realm of the freak show, talking about romantic/erotic perceptions of freaks and monsters as an expression of forbidden or deviant sexuality. He begins his chapter on “The Eros of Ugliness” with a quote from *The Man Who Laughs*, in which Josiana explains her lust for Gwynplaine by insisting that “deformity is akin to sublimity.”²⁷⁰

In broader terms, the process of eroticising the monster figure is closely entwined with a belief in his unrestrained sexuality stemming from his connections with primordial mythic symbolism. One of the first images Mephisto tempts Faust with in Murnau’s *Faust* (1926), is that of a beautiful nude woman. In literary and cinematic contexts, the monster’s connection with nature and his procreative primordial essence is frequently expressed through a level of sexual liberation that is unacceptable in the civilised society of his time. Whether consciously or not, the Gothic monster is endowed with the capacity for experiencing and evoking unbridled and sometimes inexplicable sexual impulses (as in the case of the privileged Josiana, who lusts after Gwynplaine specifically because of his grotesque appearance and all that it symbolises). In a very Baudelerian sense, these impulses, which are in essence natural and creative, are seen as destructive and frightening by a society that denies the primitive, the intuitive, and the instinctual.²⁷¹ In this context the monster’s desire, as well as desire *for* the monster are equally dangerous and unacceptable.

This implication is present in all the literary works discussed in this thesis, but it is given special forcefulness when translated into the language of silent film, with its immense reliance on *physical* presentation and interaction. Murnau’s *Nosferatu*

²⁷⁰ Leslie A Fiedler, *Freaks: Myths and Images of the Secret Self* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981) 138.

²⁷¹ Charles Baudelaire, “Of the Essence of Laughter, and Generally of the Comic in the Plastic Arts,” *Baudelaire: Selected Writings on Art and Artists*, trans. P. E. Charvet (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981) 140–61.

condenses and channels the obvious sexual overtones of *Dracula* into the central relationship between Ellen/Mina and the count. As he invades her neat, evenly lit and balanced world, it is transformed through harsh, angular shadows, unbalanced compositions, and uncomfortable camera angles – it expresses the confusion typical of an encounter with the grotesque. This confusion reflects the sensations of Ellen herself, and the suggestive visual presentation forces the viewer to consider whether her civilised façade is about to crumble beneath the force of primeval desire. It appears that within the confines of a society that formally denies the grotesque, the solution to this conundrum is physical death both for Ellen and the vampire.

Leroux's *Phantom of the Opera* suggests that Erik's deformity is congenital and also that he is in some way ill and wasting away. Erik is shocked at the possibility of physical contact of any sort and is stunned when Christine kisses him, telling the Persian that it is the first time he had ever kissed a woman. He is also surprised that she did not die when she kissed him - although this is meant in a metaphorical sense the implication of contagion is there. The Julian/Chaney film is not specific about Erik's illness or the origin of his deformity, but it does allude to the unnaturalness of a potential physical union between him and Christine. The novel's ephemeral intimations of incest also hover as a shadowy presence, suggested by Erik's similarities with Christine's father (he is also a violinist), their difference in age, and his role as a mentor. Many later versions, such as the 1943 Lubin/Rains film make a point of locating his deformity in an accident, which may be meant to relieve some of the stigma of congenital deformity. However, the Lubin/Rains film widens the age gap between Erik and Christine even more than usual and an earlier version of the

script actually made him her estranged biological father.²⁷² If this detail had remained it would have brought the story's incestuous overtones to the forefront. Incest is one of the major themes in *Fall of the House of Usher* as well, tingeing representations of the two Ushers and their House. The aura of deviant sexuality stemming from Poe's story is so powerful that references to perversity and degeneration appear even in adaptations that make Madeline Roderick's wife (Epstein 1928).

Jekyll and Hyde films show no hesitation in pairing the visibly healthy and complete Jekyll with a wholesome young fiancée. Hyde however, who is generally depicted as physically twisted, is only shown consorting with prostitutes and other dishonoured or fallen women. The 1920 Robertson/Barrymore film also hints at contagion, distinctly showing signs of physical illness developing in Hyde's lover, Gina. *Nosferatu*'s prominently displayed themes of contagion, foreshadowed throughout by images of rats and coffins, culminate in Dracula and Ellen's deaths as soon as he enters her bedroom. *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1923) makes it clear that the deformed Quasimodo's desire for Esmeralda is unacceptable and perverse and his own spiritual purity is indicated by his willingness to die enabling her union with a healthier candidate. This approach connects him with Hay's "Sterility Figures", as his deformity symbolically negates the possibility of anything other than chaste adoration. His death in most versions (especially the 1923 Worsley/Chaney film), is presented as a sacrifice that allows Esmeralda to unite with the more reproductively desirable Phoebus. Orlac's abnormality in *The Hands of Orlac* is acquired but the mere implication of aberrant physicality is enough to create a chasm

²⁷² Hogle 153-72.

between him and his wife. Wiene's *Orlacs Hände* does not even trouble to make the hands appear terrifying or visibly distorted; Orlac's refusal to have physical contact with his wife after the accident is entirely dependant on his own perception of the hands as monstrous. In fact, themes of perception and sight play a large role in cinematic representations of the romanticised monster. Josiana's attraction to Gwynplaine in *The Man Who Laughs* (1928) is shown as perverse because she can see him and is specifically attracted to his deformity. Dea's love is pure because she is blind and unaware that he is deformed at all. In the film, her lack of perception narratively negates the stigma of his disfigurement.

V.2.5. The “Impossible Real” Monster

A certain level of ambiguity and distance from the monster is sometimes important in building up suspense and tension. In her study of monstrous representation, *The Unnameable Monster in Literature and Film*, Maria Beville argues that the withholding of a monster's appearance on screen allows him/her/it “to be conceived of as the ‘impossible real’ as it traverses positions of objectivity and subjectivity in the radical and elusive nature of its being.”²⁷³ Erik's designation as “phantom” throughout the novel (*The Phantom of the Opera*) and the overwrought emotional states of all those who describe encounters with him leave the question of his actual existence in a state of ambiguity. He is described numerous times by different characters, but the very multiplicity and disparity of these descriptions serves to create a representational void. The reader has no way of determining which

²⁷³ Maria Beville, *The Unnameable Monster in Literature and Film* (New York: Routledge, 2014) 133.

sources are reliable and whether their veracity is tainted by fear, superstition, inebriation, fantasy, or the desire to manipulate the listener. By giving Erik a bodily presence, cinema enables the viewer to form an individual response that is not necessarily guided by those of the other characters within the narrative. When Christine declares that Erik's face is horrifying, the reader must take her word for it, while the film viewer may disagree and find her fears laughable.

The theme of revealing and concealing permeates all *Phantom* adaptations from their visual and narrative handling of Erik's crimes and their consequences to their use of the mask as a device to hide or emphasise his physical deficiency. Although Erik's mask is not technically an element of makeup, it is an essential component of his visual presentation and is closely tied to the stylistic approach chosen for his deformity. Notably, the simple white half-mask taken for granted by most modern audiences as the iconic symbol of the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is not mentioned at any point by Leroux. Erik is never described as wearing such a mask and it does not feature in any of the earlier film adaptations. The very idea of a mask (rather than a deformed/disfigured face) as a defining feature of Erik's appearance is a convention that has evolved gradually over the course of numerous adaptations. Leroux mentions several masks and disguises in the novel but he does not highlight a single mask that serves as Erik's chosen face. The mask he wears during his first face-to-face encounter with Christine is actually black rather than white. Black is a far more logical choice for a character who dwells in shadow and darkness. The colour's rich metaphorical implications are touched on as well, when Erik compels Christine to join him in singing a duet from the opera *Othello*. Christine herself draws a direct parallel between Erik and *Othello*, telling Raoul that "Erik's black

mask made me think of the natural mask of the Moor of Venice,” and concluding that “He was Othello himself.”²⁷⁴ With this statement she effectively conflates Erik’s mask with his identity, equating the mask’s appearance with Othello’s foreign/racial exoticism, possessive attitude and murderous jealousy.

The reference to Othello’s “natural mask” has additional relevance here as, in the novel, Erik repeatedly makes use of his own socially unacceptable face rather than an artificial mask. Unlike the majority of cinematic Phantoms, the literary Erik spends most of his time unmasked, subtly manipulating his natural features to either blend in or shock. He uses only a false nose to “disguise” himself when he appears at the retiring managers’ farewell dinner. While his neighbours at the dinner table do notice that he is unnaturally pale and thin, they readily assume that he is just one of the guests.²⁷⁵ Erik shows no hesitation in revealing his unembellished face to scare overly curious stagehands away from his underground realm or to impede Raoul’s pursuit of him at the cemetery in Perros-Guirec. The fact that Raoul instantly recognises him at the Opera’s masked ball implies a fascinating conclusion - Erik is using his real face as a disguise and is not wearing a mask here either. Throughout the novel, Erik’s ambiguous deformity seems to morph and transfigure based entirely on the environment he appears in and the expectations of his spectators. In the darkness of the cellars and the eerie stillness of the cemetery, Christine and Raoul see a living corpse; at the crowded dinner table he is an eccentric, ailing guest; and at the masked ball he is an exotic spectacle, exciting admiration and awe - all with the same face. His mask is essentially constructed by the perceptions of whoever is observing him at a given moment. This is an intriguing concept in literary and

²⁷⁴ Leroux 149-50.

²⁷⁵ Leroux 40.

symbolic terms. In a cinematic form however, it would require the exposure of Erik's face early in the film, robbing the moment of much of its shock value. This consideration has lead many cinematic adaptations to rely on the device of a more tangible mask to maintain the Phantom's mystique until the crucial unmasking sequence.

The style of the mask varies widely from film to film, affected in part by the extent of Erik's deformity and in part by the film's readiness to showcase it. The Ford's *Phantom of the Violin* (1914) has no need of a mask, with its focus on psychological rather than physical abnormality and its projection of mental conditions onto sets rather than bodies. In the 1925 Julian/Chaney film, which celebrates the meticulous construction of the deformed face, the mask is an arbitrary element that is soon discarded. An artificial imitation of a "normal" human face, it reveals just enough to hint that there is "something hideous and unearthly about the rest of his features."²⁷⁶ It is simply a device to build up anticipation for the inevitable unmasking rather than a stylistic statement. Paradoxically, it is the Chaney film that introduces the use of an elaborate skull mask for the masquerade scene in place of Erik's natural face. The film has no scruples about spectacularising Erik's deformity but it is oddly hesitant about showing the character do the same to himself. The fact that this scene occurs after both Christine and the audience have already seen him unmasked makes this a subtle but meaningful digression. As his appearance is no longer a mystery, the decision to conceal it again suggests a more vulnerable and self-conscious Erik who requires the aid of an extravagant death's-head mask to feel intimidating. This is tantamount to admitting that his face is repulsive enough to

²⁷⁶ Everson, *Classics* 13.

deprive him of basic human interaction but not enough to make him look like a powerful force of evil. The design of the Red Death costume and the skull mask is among the most recurrently imitated features of the Julian/Chaney film's legacy.

The 1943 Lubin/Rains film, although shot on the same sets, takes a diametrically opposite approach to its treatment of the face/mask dynamic. As one of the earliest artificially disfigured Phantoms, Rains also spends most of his screen time unmasked - but only *before* the accident takes place. In its attempts to tone down the violence of the source material, the film all but erases the Phantom's disfigurement stripping it of both its narrative value and its visual impact. Erique's life is already destroyed by his declining health, his financial ruin, his fraying sanity and the murder he has committed - all before he becomes disfigured. When a mask does finally make its appearance, it reveals no suggestion of the underlying distortion. It is removed so late in the film and so briefly, that the mangled countenance itself becomes more a shock effect than a visual definition of the character.

Generally, the earlier adaptations lean towards privileging the *face* behind the mask as the ultimate representation of the Phantom character while later films (especially from the 1962 Fisher/Lom version onwards) rely on the mask to define his onscreen presence. The Lubin/Rains version is one of the first to attempt the development of a signature mask. Unlike the seemingly random theatrical mask shown in the Julian/Chaney film, this iteration is designed to conform organically to the contours of Rains's face. Merging seamlessly with his costume and hairstyle it denotes Erique's transfiguration into the Phantom, replacing the face and identity that he has lost. This effect is diluted however when the film's final operatic production introduces a masked chorus wearing multiple masks identical to Erique's.

He uses this to evade the police by vanishing into the crowd. The mask's uniqueness is thus denigrated, leaving Rains's natural face as the main visual representation of the Phantom.

In the 1928 adaptation of *The Man Who Laughs*, Conrad Veidt's minimalism in the use of makeup helps him to convey the dualism of his character much more than a slavish visual reconstruction of the description given in the original source. Hugo comments on the duality and self-reflexivity of his character throughout the novel:

When he looked at himself, he saw one he knew not; but this unknown was a monster. Gwynplaine lived as it were beheaded, with a face which did not belong to him....The unfortunate heart, masked and calumniated by the face, seemed for ever condemned to solitude under it, as under a tombstone....it was by his own flesh that Gwynplaine was masked! What his visage had been, he knew not. His face had vanished. They had affixed to him a false self. He had for a face, a disappearance. His head lived, his face was dead. He never remembered to have seen it.²⁷⁷

Hence, the face Gwynplaine shows to the world is in fact a void that hides the "impossible reality" of the original face he has never known and is unable to regain. His deformity makes his true identity invisible. In the 1928 film, after his social elevation he is transformed through his costume, exchanging his plain garments for a curly powdered wig, a silk shirt with lace cuffs, and an extravagantly embroidered vest and jacket. His "mask" also evolves - originally he uses a simple black scarf to cover the lower half of his face, but this is replaced by a lacy handkerchief. Resetting his identity through his social standing he endeavours to change his face by upgrading the accessory used to cover it.

The importance of the mask in *Phantom* films grows progressively throughout the twentieth century and much thought is lavished into personalising its design and presentation. The Fisher/Lom (1962) version's featureless mask leaves only a single

²⁷⁷ Hugo, *The Man Who Laughs* 202.

eye visible, epitomising its owner's loss of identity. In the 1983 film directed by Robert Markowitz, Maximilian Schell's Phantom hides behind a malformed gargoyle-like disguise that is almost more repellant than his injured face. By the 1990 Tony Richardson miniseries, Charles Dance's Erik never removes his mask at all. Born deformed, he does not have a pre-Phantom face to show like Rains, but he does not reveal a strikingly distorted one like Chaney either. The mask is literally the only face he has.

It can be speculated that the growing significance of the mask relates on some level to the story's increasing alignment with the horror genre, eventually influencing non-horror versions like the Richardson/Dance miniseries. Masks are frequently accorded iconic status in late-twentieth-century slasher franchises such as *Halloween*, *Friday the 13th* and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. The psychopathic central characters are sometimes portrayed by different actors in different instalments with shifting backstories, motivations, even names - leaving the mask as the only constant feature of the character's identity. It should be noted that the tradition of a mask rather than a human actor's face defining a cinematic character is not restricted to the horror genre. In the initial trilogy of the science fiction *Star Wars* franchise (1977-1983), the role of main antagonist Darth Vader is credited to four different actors (James Earl Jones, David Prowse, Bob Anderson and Sebastian Shaw) who represented his voice, his body, his stunt work and his unmasked face, respectively. In the 1999-2005 prequel trilogy the character is portrayed by two different actors (Jake Lloyd and Hayden Christensen), which is understandable as the storyline follows his passage from childhood to adulthood. Neither is given the opportunity to truly represent Darth Vader's human face however, as he becomes increasingly

digitally enhanced throughout the films, finally ending up in the traditional suit and mask. In the end, the visual identity of the character relies fully on the famously recognisable mask. On the basis of these examples, Erik's movement into the mask-as-face convention could be seen equally as a dehumanisation of the character or as an elevation to archetypal status because of the universal themes he represents. It can be argued that in all of the above-mentioned films, the device of the mask or stylised prosthetic face produces a variant of the ambiguity described by Beville, concealing a real face behind an artificial one to announce "the radical and elusive nature" of a monster's "being" and preserve his status as "the impossible real."

The above examples correlate with Judith Halberstam's interesting discussion of the symbolic implications of the monstrous body in Gothic literary fiction. She describes the monstrous body as "a specifically deviant form" comparable to a machine that absorbs the phobias of the reader and embodies them within the narrative announcing "itself as the place of corruption."²⁷⁸ In his study of the "beast-monster", Joseph Andriano echoes this view adding that hybridised animalistic monsters specifically address fears related to evolution/devolution, challenging the boundaries between the civilised Self and the atavistic Other.²⁷⁹

As discussed in this chapter, film is capable of encoding a wealth of symbolic information into the monstrous body through purely cinematic techniques such as close-ups, framing, lighting and editing, utilising a part or feature as a replacement or signifier for the whole. For the monster, these tools made it possible to highlight the elements that could define or categorise his monstrous role more than his entire body

²⁷⁸ Halberstam 2.

²⁷⁹ Andriano 164.

could. In this sense, the idea of the monstrous body as an embodiment of more abstract fears and concerns becomes especially relevant in film, with its potential for the detailed visualisation of multiple interconnected layers of meaning.

Chapter VI - The Architectural Monster

VI.1. Definition of the Architectural Monster

The previous analysis has revealed a strong relationship between silent cinematic monster figures and their environments. In their literary forms and particularly in their earliest cinematic incarnations, monsters such as *The House of Usher's* Roderick, *The Phantom of the Opera's* Erik, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame's* Quasimodo, the eponymous vampire in *Dracula* and others may be referred to as “Architectural Monsters”.

The Architectural Monster in my understanding is a human (or humanoid) character who is doubled by the space/environment he inhabits. This space and the seemingly inanimate objects within it are endowed with sentience and movement through their physical and symbolic interconnections with the monster's mind and body and also serve as representations of the monster's internal state. In *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, the hunchbacked bell-ringer Quasimodo becomes the voice of the cathedral and is frequently described as its “soul”. Roderick Usher and his twin sister fade and die in parallel with their crumbling house and Dracula transplants parts of his native environment when he travels, carrying boxes of soil taken from around his castle.

The idea of the sentient or haunted building is deeply entrenched in the Gothic literary tradition, stretching beyond novels that centre on a monster in humanoid form. Novels like Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* or Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* are filled with castles, dungeons and torchlit passageways vibrating with ominous, disembodied sounds and

elusive phantom presences. These spaces and their furnishings are frequently described in terms that endow them with sentience or connect them with the subconscious or emotional conditions of the human characters within. They are not always associated with specific monster figures, but their atmospheres are charged with the evil deeds committed within their walls and the restless souls of unavenged victims. They become emotional repositories that echo, reveal, conceal or absorb the fears and secrets of their inhabitants, much like the portrait of Dorian Gray.

VI.2. Specificity of the Monstrous Environment in Silent Film

In the context of silent film, the physical presence and “movement” of the monster’s environment plays a very strong role in filling the void left by the absence of speech, sound effects and a synchronised score. Although the origin of this device is literary, it gains a new strength and relevance in the transfer to film due to its strong figurative potential. The monster’s emotional states, inner conflicts and development as a character can be mapped onto his environment, giving the audience privileged access to his subconscious. In film, this approach usually requires the monster to be primarily isolated within a single environment represented by a single set or a sequence of aesthetically interconnected sets. Leroux’s Erik for instance, is far more mobile than his cinematic counterparts, traveling the world as far as Persia and Russia. In his earliest transfers to film however, he is firmly confined within the Opera House and its underground realm, visually emphasising his role as an organic part of its organism like Roderick and his house. The Opera House becomes almost indistinguishable from his life force and he is doomed to death and destruction when

he tries to escape it, as in the Julian/Chaney film. Some later versions even show him being raised in the cellars from infancy and having no experience with the outside world. Reaching a technical and symbolic peak in the two 1928 adaptations of *Fall of the House of Usher*, the monstrous environment later went on to become an omnipresent motif in sound era horror films.

The sentient environment as part of the monster's visual representation carries strong mythological and supernatural overtones. This is especially true for the Erik/Phantom character, with his symbolically-loaded deformity and his mysterious underground realm. Less environmentally-grounded monsters like Jekyll and Hyde or Frankenstein's Creature tend to represent more thematically contained anxieties such as loss of identity, personal versus social morality and fear of scientific advancement. Although seemingly restricted by his dependance on a specific environment, the "architectural monster" represents deeper and broader mythological themes and archetypes. Roderick Usher for instance, is part of a self-generating/destructing supernatural organism with ancient roots and incestuous implications and Dracula is a mythic creature himself, emerging from his half-ruined castle to spread plague and contagion across the modern, civilised world. The dynamic synergy and monstified interchange between a human/humanoid body and an architectural or natural space provides fertile ground for exploring profound concepts and anxieties that could not be contained by an isolated human form.

VI.3. Architecture as Monster

VI.3.1. Architectural Styles as Uncanny, “Immoral,” “Monstrous,” “Repulsive,” and “Plainly Wrong”

The concept of the architectural monument as monster is perhaps paradoxical, as architectural styles and monuments themselves were never designed to look monstrous or to convey “uncanny” connotations. In fact, most of the types of buildings utilised in literature and especially film as “demonic spaces” were conceived and designed as spiritual or luxurious spaces (cathedrals, churches, abbeys, castles, palaces etc) They were seen by their creators and original inhabitants as places for spiritual rejuvenation, peaceful retreat or as comfortingly private strongholds. The walls of these structures protected positively and even spiritually charged inner spaces from outside evil and disturbance.

In his book, *The Architectural Uncanny*, Anthony Vidler notes that

the ‘uncanny’ is not a property of the space itself...it is, in its aesthetic dimension, a representation of a mental state of projection that precisely elides the boundaries of the real and the unreal in order to provoke a disturbing ambiguity, a slippage between waking and dreaming. In this sense, it is perhaps difficult to speak of an ‘architectural’ uncanny, in the same terms as a literary or psychological uncanny; certainly no one building, no special effects of design can be guaranteed to provoke an uncanny feeling.²⁸⁰

However, particular types of buildings and architectural styles have been ascribed “evil” or “demonic” connotations through mythology, fairy tales, folklore, literature and even linguistic developments. They were “created” or labeled as new signs for expressing certain associations, feelings and ideas. Cinema re-used and further

²⁸⁰ Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992) 11.

developed some of these literary and linguistic “signs” and in some cases developed its own, adding to the cultural sign system.

The choice of architectural environment in Silent Era monster films was highly influenced by attitudes towards particular architectural styles and their historical contexts. The attitudes and related connotations could date as far back as the Renaissance or even earlier. Vitruvius’s *On Architecture* includes one of the earliest deliberate attempts at engaging with the concept of the grotesque as an aesthetic and architectural phenomenon. Vitruvius rejected elements perceived as grotesque on the grounds that they violated the harmony of the universe as it was conceived – geometrically balanced and mathematically precise, with all of its parts based on the circle, the most perfect of all geometric forms. Combining aesthetics and philosophy, he insisted that anything that didn’t conform to these strict rules was immoral, monstrous, repulsive, and plainly wrong. Vitruvius’ concept of art and architecture as vehicles for reflecting the absolute mathematical harmony of the universe was enthusiastically absorbed by Renaissance artists and theorists, who interpreted it in a new, acutely Christianised light.

Since then, the harmony and proportionality of Renaissance architecture has frequently been juxtaposed by theorists with Gothic architecture. The cultural encoding of the Middle Ages as the “Dark Ages” has still not been fully overcome to this day. Dimly-lit Gothic cathedrals inhabited by numerous sculpted creatures have long been perceived as places of mystery and danger, in contrast to the harmony of well-lit Renaissance buildings. Centuries before the birth of cinema, this approach was already prevalent in literature. As Juan Antonio Ramírez points out, “ever since publication of Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), the first “Gothick”

novel, literary precedents became crucial for making architectural settings play key roles in dramatic schemes of terror and supernatural thrills.²⁸¹ From the earliest days of cinema, references to Gothic architecture were used not merely to denote historical setting, but as a signifier of evil/danger even if the style itself was anachronistic to the time period depicted.

Trying to date the beginning of this trend in cinema Ramírez states that:

The first great movie in which pointed (ogive) medieval architecture appeared as the natural framework for both terror and deformity was *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1923). In the role of Victor Hugo's infamous hunchback, 'Quasimodo,' Lon Chaney could represent subliminally the ambiguous nature of the Gothic age for the 'Wasp' spirit: monstrous and horrible outside, but possessing within a beautiful soul.²⁸²

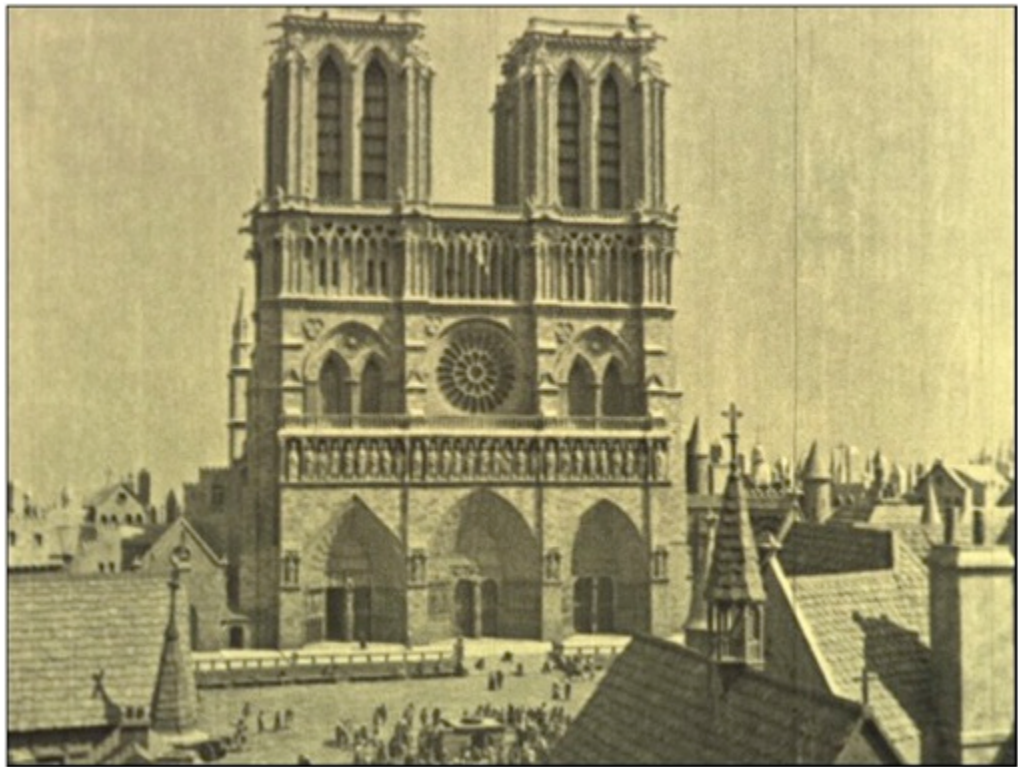


Figure 60: Gothic architecture used as a signifier of evil/danger in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Worsley, 1923). Film frame.

²⁸¹ Juan Antonio Ramírez, *Architecture for the Screen: A Critical Study of Set Design in Hollywood's Golden Age* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2004) 136.

²⁸² Ramírez 136.

However, even this date (1923) is not early enough. There is plentiful evidence of the usage of Gothic architecture as terrifying in much earlier films. Examples of this include the castle-like laboratory set in August Blom's *Den Skaebnesvangre Opfindelse* (a 1910 Danish adaptation of *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*), F.W. Murnau's 1922 *Dracula* adaptation *Nosferatu*, Julius Herzka's 1921 film *Das Grinsende Gesicht* (a German adaptation of *The Man Who Laughs*) numerous turn-of-the-century short films by Georges Méliès, John S. Robertson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1920), and numerous others, also previously to 1923.

In fact, the use of Gothic influences in the architecture and design of Jekyll and Hyde films in particular quickly become a recurrent trend, especially in the design of the laboratory set. Publicity stills for *Den Skaebnesvangre Opfindelse* show a grim environment with bare stone walls and small shelves supported by jutting, angular brackets. A long narrow window with a pointed arch fills the back wall and the numerous, small panes of glass that fill it are strongly reminiscent of stained glass. In the 1920 John S. Robertson film starring John Barrymore, the laboratory has a strong castle/dungeon-like atmosphere and the passage connecting Jekyll's house with the laboratory is flanked by a series of brick arches. Bringing to mind the aisles of a Gothic cathedral, they mark out the passage as a transition between the comfort of familiar reality and the realm of the Gothic. This approach is even more strongly emphasised in Stan Laurel's 1925 parody of the Robertson film, *Dr. Pyckle and Mr. Pride*. Although the interiors are relatively ambiguous, an exterior view of Dr. Pyckle's laboratory reveals a monumental stone arch and a flight of narrow steps constructed of rough stone blocks, leading to an arched doorway. The whole structure seems far more like something out of a medieval castle than a Victorian

townhouse. Both films are ostensibly set in the 19th century and none of the Jekyll and Hyde films specifically move Jekyll's abode to a medieval castle or dungeon. Echoing Ramírez's statement, all of these films use anachronistic medieval Gothic elements both to indicate a historical setting (even a more recent one) and to suggest ominous/sinister overtones.

Alongside Gothic architecture, ancient Greek and Egyptian architectural references were utilised to indicate the Dionysian and/or Chthonic nature of the monster. In silent adaptations of *The Phantom of the Opera* and *Fall of the House of Usher* underground spaces are visually and symbolically interpreted as monstrous spaces based on the mythological undertones of the monster's environment. The ancient Greek mythological vision of the Underworld as a realm of the dead approached in a boat crossing the river Styx is clearly referenced in Rupert Julian's *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925). Erik, the Phantom, becomes one of the numerous souls existing in deep dark spaces somewhere underneath, below the world of the living. Egyptian mythology could have been another cultural factor in the visual interpretation of Erik's underground "demonic" space. The famous tomb of Tutankhamun was discovered by Howard Carter in 1922 and became a huge influence on the culture of its time. The coffin was opened and the mummy revealed in 1925, the date of the film. The underground passage and minimalistic stone "burial chamber" with a coffin instead of a bed follow the descriptions given in the novel, but also give a more austere image possibly referencing a "mummy" that resurrects daily from its coffin in the Netherworld. David Spur notes that spaces with a connection to a pre-modern or prehistoric past are often seen as sites for visceral,

depraved actions.²⁸³ Erik's Netherworld-like space, combined with the carnival "dancing" culture of the Opera's upper spaces puts him in both chthonic and Dionysian mythological environments.



Figure 61: Erik's underground realm as a mythological Netherworld in *The Phantom of the Opera* (Julian, 1925). Screen grab taken by author.

VI.3.2. Mapping the Monster's Consciousness Onto Architecture Through the Language of Silent Film

Each of the main elements of filmmaking contributes to the way in which a film's architectural style is chosen, designed and interpreted according to the aesthetic of the director, the style of cinematography, lighting design and art direction. The infinite malleability of filmic space - through design, lighting and framing as well as the actual movement and alteration of its parts - also opens the possibility of physically mapping the monster's consciousness onto the spaces he inhabits.

²⁸³ David Spurr, *Architecture and Modern Literature* (Ann Arbor, Mich: University of Michigan Press, 2012) 73-98.

In *Phantom of the Opera* adaptations, cinematic techniques and design elements are used to explore various levels and facets of interconnection between Erik and the Opera. The sets and props themselves become a large part of the way the character is presented and interpreted, revealing details about his past life, his psychological state and his dreams and desires. The ability to seem invisible is one of his main characteristics - a challenge for cinematic representation. This feature calls for an environment so steeped in his aura that his menace is felt even when he is off-screen, exuding a sense of the disquieting, the uncanny.

Vidler's statement that a space cannot be inherently uncanny relates to actual buildings rather than the simulated reality of cinematic space. The elision of boundaries between illusion and reality is one of the principle capabilities of cinema. Its tools are ideally sited to the representation of mental states and the construction of spatial, temporal and psychological ambiguity. A filmic space does not have to be functional in the conventional sense - it will not be slept in or cooked in, it is not built to last for decades, it doesn't need to contain extensive wiring or plumbing in its walls or keep its inhabitants warm in the winter. It can be made of anything, from bricks and mortar to painted cardboard and it can represent the most fantastic and impractical structures imaginable - as long as it registers well on camera and suits the requirements of the film. Due to this extraordinary versatility, a filmic space can be designed to provoke a specific response. Requisite features can be built into it and it can be lit, framed and edited within the film with the calculated intention of provoking an uncanny sensation in the viewer (for example).

The differing approaches to set design demonstrated by the two 1928 adaptations of *Fall of the House of Usher* (Epstein and Watson/Webber) illustrate their directors'

interpretations of the source material and understanding of the film medium itself.

The hand-painted cardboard structures of the Watson/Webber film have been described by composer Alec Wilder as “a maze of toppling cubist sets.”²⁸⁴ Both “maze” and “cubist” are apt choices of term here, as the resulting film shows a strong preoccupation with spatial misdirection, fragmentation, and the labyrinthine integration of different spaces and time frames into a single shot. Throughout the film, the House is never shown as a complete, stable entity. Epstein on the other hand, gives his House the same type of intimate and subtle gestures that he encourages in his actors. The body of the House, its walls, passageways, fireplaces and staircases are all set down in solid stone and mortar. Its Gothic, castle-like facade, its cavernous high-ceilinged rooms, its enormous fireplaces with leering gargoyles and chimaeras, all seem substantial enough at first sight. This deceptive appearance of stability makes it all the more unnerving when movement begins to creep in, escalating stealthily towards the catastrophic climax. Unlike Webber and Watson’s spectral apparition, this House is overwhelmingly tactile.

Elaborating on the concept of the “haunted house”, Vidler notes that perceptions of a given building may be heavily informed by superstitious beliefs and a knowledge of past events and inhabitants relating to the building.²⁸⁵ In a film, this sort of “knowledge” can easily be constructed by means of narrative structure and suggestive imagery. The Julian/Chaney film makes ample use of symbolic signposts such as black cats, exaggerated shadows and severed heads to render the Opera’s cellars uncanny. The doom-laden Julian/Chaney cellars overflow with conspicuously

²⁸⁴ Alec Wilder, “The Films of J. S. Watson, Jr., and Melville Webber: Some Retrospective Views (III),” *University of Rochester Library Bulletin* Winter 1975.

²⁸⁵ Vidler 17-9.

Gothic imagery that would be just as appropriate in Ann Radcliffe's *Castle of Udolpho*, Horace Walpole's supernaturally afflicted *Castle of Otranto* or Matthew Lewis's abbeys and underground dungeons. Stone staircases spiral down into murky underground spaces, pointed arches and rough stone walls emerge from the flickering shadows. The upper cellars are littered with the debris of past productions, mixing ill-assorted elements like monumental statues of pagan gods, scattered skulls, hideous masks, glinting weapons and the head of an enormous monster with fanged jaws gaping wide. Scene-shifter Joseph Buquet sits in the shadows cradling a naturalistically detailed, severed prop head that blinks as he tinkers with it. Almost everything is grotesquely over-sized, conjuring up a grimly carnivalesque environment. Themes of imprisonment and insanity are evoked in the elaborately intersecting design of the passages and staircases leading to Erik's subterranean realm, throwing bars of shadow across passing figures and framing them in cell block-like compartments as they travel downward. Ramírez draws an astutely observed parallel between Ben Carré's design and the fantasy prison engravings of 18th century Italian artist Giovanni Battista Piranesi. The reference encapsulates both the sense of criminal internment and a dark whimsy - Piranesi's images were based on imaginary structures. Combined with dark tales of the Phantom's frightful acts told to shivering little ballerinas, these images outline the anticipated audience response as clearly as the written intertitles.

While this uncanny sensation can be produced through the construction of a completely fantastical, distorted structure, it can also be evoked by the subtle de-familiarisation of recognisable landmarks such as the Paris Opera House or Notre Dame Cathedral through filming style. Echoing the unease and perplexity brought on

by the presence of a monster, the cinematic monster's environment is frequently constructed to evoke the sense of something amiss. The manipulation of scale, proportion and volume along with unexpected juxtapositions of props and settings can both draw the viewer into the menacing atmosphere of the film and reveal insights into the characters involved.



Figure 62: The scale replica of the Paris Opera built at Universal Studios for *The Phantom of the Opera* (Julian, 1925) with structural modifications to accommodate lighting rigs and camera angles.

In some cases, the action of the films calls for structural modifications that would have been unfeasible in an actual building. Ramírez raises this issue, citing the incorporation of “improbable” structural modifications into the medieval castle set used in *Robin Hood* (1922) to enhance the drama of the story. He goes on to list the “Six Distinctive Qualities” that separate film architecture from its real-world counterpart. These qualities include: fragmentation of the physical structure of the set and its presentation on film; the ability to modify the sizes and proportions of real

architecture to fit the aesthetic and technical needs of the film (ranging from miniature sets used in special effects sequences to grotesquely oversized walls that conceal the lack of a ceiling); distortions in the usually rectangular space of real interiors, creating trapezoidal shapes, oddly angled walls, and displaced vanishing points in order to construct forced perspective/the illusion of depth and accommodate the eye of the camera; and the exaggeration of architectural elements and details to counter the camera lens's flattening effects or draw attention to certain areas.²⁸⁶

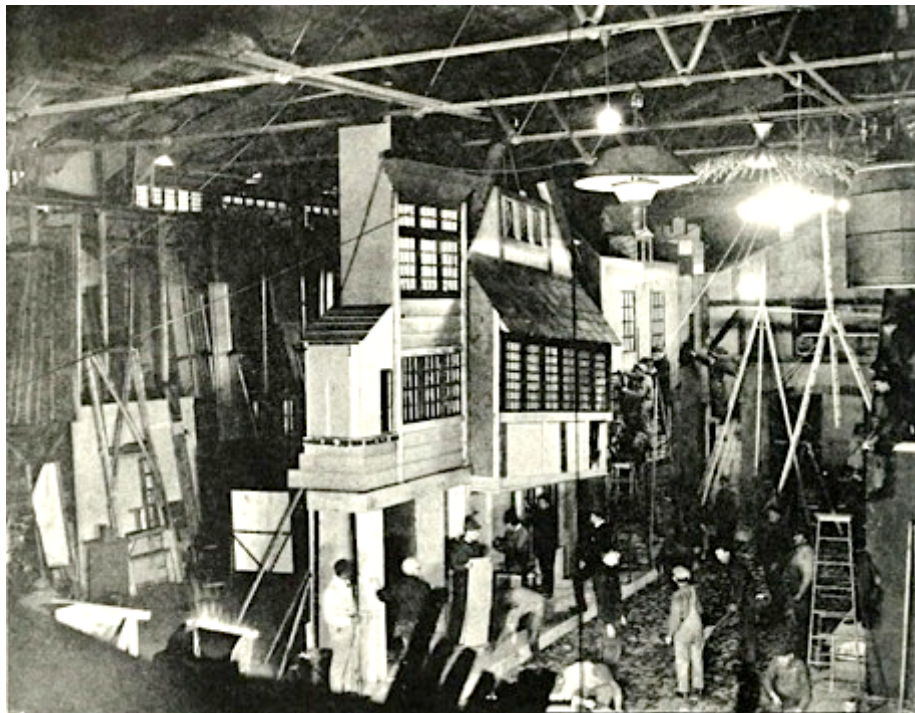


Figure 63: Production still showing set under construction for *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Robertson, 1920).

Even a seemingly undistorted set must be carefully customised to the style and effects of a given film. In Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris*, the cathedral itself is one of the central characters, merging with the lives of every animate character in the narrative, witnessing the unfolding of their stories and participating in some of the

²⁸⁶ Ramírez 81-9.

novel's most dramatic and pivotal scenes. Its iconic façade figures prominently in all direct adaptations, whether in shots of the actual cathedral as in the French Capellani/Krauss version (1911) or as an elaborate reconstruction. Even when artificially constructed, as in Worsley/Chaney (1923), it is not noticeably modified or distorted, but adheres as closely as possible to the original structure. It is used as a self-contained statement that needs no embellishment. Much of the action occurs either in the square in front of the cathedral or within its cavernous interior.

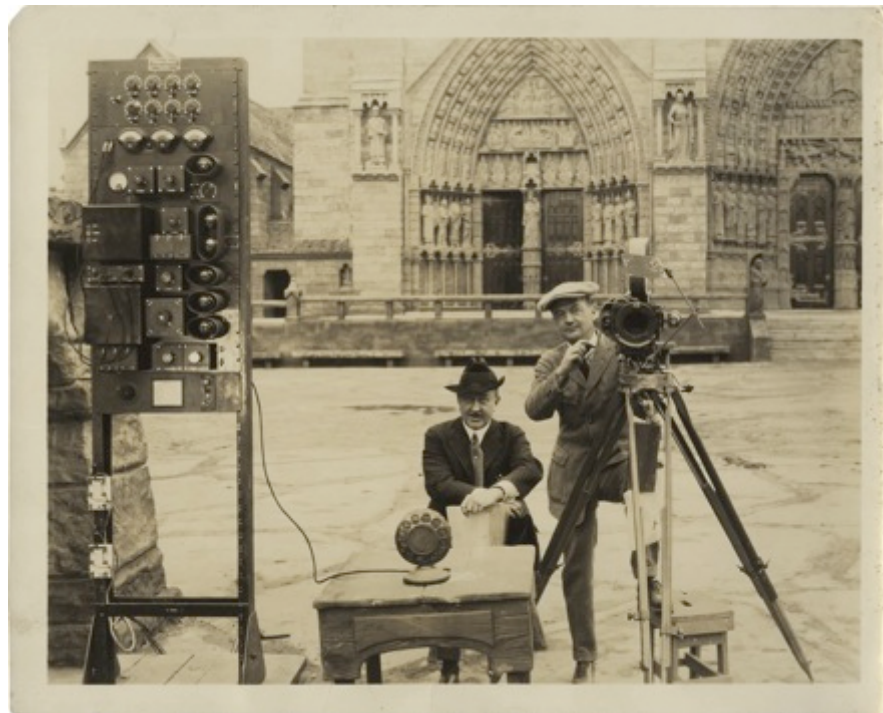


Figure 64: Production still showing the exterior of the Notre Dame Cathedral set constructed for Universal's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Worsley, 1923) and briefly featured in the final chase sequence in *The Phantom of the Opera* (Julian, 1925).

The interior sets are uniformly designed to be imposing as well, although they do show more stylistic variations than the exteriors. They all display heavy Gothic influences (in the romanticised literary sense as well as the historically architectural), abounding with pointed arches, bare stone walls, long, gloomy aisles and candles. The earlier Capellani/Krauss film takes a theatrical approach to the set design. The

interiors are two-dimensional and confined, with well-defined boundaries and no sense of a larger space beyond. The room in which Quasimodo hides Esmeralda, and where Frollo later attempts to assault her, is very clearly a three-walled structure. The side walls are constructed at slightly obtuse angles to the back wall to slope outwards towards the camera and artificially enhance the illusion of depth. An anachronistically large window covers most of the back wall. Any sense of depth or distance implied by the window is eliminated by the presence of a decidedly flat landscape panel right outside it. The more naturalistic Chaney film epitomises the other end of the stylistic spectrum. Its huge, ostentatious sets provide large spaces for the actors to inhabit, enabling the camera to utilise a much greater range of shooting angles. The cathedral interiors, focusing on the bell tower and nave, are very detailed and textured, using dramatic light and shadow effects to enhance the atmosphere.



Figure 65: Elaborate interiors and dramatic lighting in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Worsley, 1923). Lon Chaney as Quasimodo and Nigel De Brulier as Claude Frollo. Publicity still.

Although not included in Ramírez's list, lighting of course also plays a very important role in modifying cinematic architecture (since cinematic space is wholly visual). In silent Jekyll and Hyde adaptations, contrasting shooting angles and lighting schemes map Jekyll's physical and emotional shifts onto the environments he inhabits, especially his laboratory, the centrepiece of any Jekyll and Hyde adaptation. The uncertain flicker of candlelight and the ominous glow of a fireplace endow even the most commonplace drawing room with a sense of approaching danger. In *Der Andere*, Hallers's study is transformed by the deep shadows cast by a large fireplace, giving the comfortable, business-like room an indefinable sense of oppressiveness. As Hallers leans on the mantelpiece, the dancing flames highlight fragments of his face and figure, suggesting the fragmented state of his psyche and the evil influence that is about to consume him. The Brenon/Baggott and Robertson/Barrymore versions both use murky fireplace lighting as an outward expression of the growing unrest in Jekyll's soul. In Brenon/Baggott the firelight accompanies Jekyll's first uncontrolled transformation, the moment when his own experiment begins to turn on him and take over his consciousness. For Robertson/Barrymore, the gloomy threat implied by the fire comes much earlier, illuminating Jekyll's face as he contemplates his own duality, unaware as yet of how far these thoughts will lead him. When applied to Jekyll's laboratory and domestic spaces, alternations in lighting scheme and shooting angle subtly represent the fluctuations in his personality, particularly in the Robertson/Barrymore film. Jekyll's laboratory is first seen harmoniously lit and shown at eye level – a structured, functional space. When it is encountered by Hyde in a later scene, it is shot from a

much lower angle, and a single ray of light coming from a high window barely dispels the gathering shadows. The same space begins to seem much more cavernous and unsettling when seen from Hyde's twisted perspective. Darker lighting and low-angle compositions convey the shift to Hyde's POV even before he enters the scene.

VI.3.3. Architecture as Character: The Personification of Architectural Environments

Newly-developed cinematic techniques allowed for silent film architectural spaces to become vivid characters in themselves, as much or even more emotionally charged than their literary counterparts. These methods are comparable to the literary approaches described by Warren Hunting Smith in *Architecture in English Fiction*:

In the novels of the nineteenth century, architecture came to life. The house awoke from its previous inanimate condition, and began to assume human characteristics. Chimneys yawned - and became throats. Windows peered - and became eyes. The whole facade lifted up the light of its countenance, and revealed, to the sensitive observer, a face that was startlingly lifelike.²⁸⁷

It is interesting to note that most of the novels included in this thesis also belong to the nineteenth-century and that the increased personification of literary architecture coincides with its monstrification. If a building can be alive and have a personality, it can also be evil or abnormal.

Not restricted to the nineteenth century, descriptions of the human body as castle or cathedral columns as legs appear as early as Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queen* (1590-1596) and 18th century Gothic romances. However, Smith contends that "between such early symbolism and real personification, there is nevertheless a wide

²⁸⁷ Warren Hunting Smith, *Architecture in English Fiction* (New Haven, Conn. & London: Gazelle Book Services, 1934) 202.

gulf. Allegorical buildings, though sometimes personified, were never personalities.”²⁸⁸ In other words, there are at least two distinct ways to meld bodily and architectural symbolism - the allegorical approach, which does not label a building as sentient but simply assigns it humanised characteristics metaphorically or to express the emotions it evokes in a human observer; and the literal personification of a space in which it is assigned its own atmospheric aura and its own sense of charisma that affects those who enter it. Smith highlights “charm” as the main distinguishing characteristic between the two. In 18th century Gothic novels,

you feared the castle, but you never loved it. It could overawe, but it could not charm. Charm, indeed, was the magic quality that quickened architecture into life. The house became a soul, warmed into existence by the tender intimacies of generations of inhabitants, who of their collective personalities gave the house a personality of its own.²⁸⁹

Both in Poe’s *Usher* and the two 1928 adaptations, the House does have a very strong “personality of its own.” In effect, it becomes the main character, taking on elements of the roles of the monster and the narrator simultaneously. The human characters are presented through the “perspective” of the House, and their physical and psychological interactions with it, emphasising the fact that Roderick and the House are one another’s doubles. The House is presented the dominant figure - a repository of ancient knowledge, a cryptic maze of elusive mystery that engulfs and disorients the humans who dare to enter it. Its suggested weight of experience and power either overwhelms its human counterparts as in the Watson and Webber version, or presents them through the “eyes” of the House as in the Epstein film (blocking off the visitor/narrator’s sensory perceptions but embracing Roderick who

²⁸⁸ Smith 203.

²⁸⁹ Smith 203-4.

is native and familiar to the House). It is the House that is omniscient, seeing and hearing everything that goes on inside it and “narrating” the action to the audience.

VI.4. The Monster as Architecture

VI.4.1. The Symbiosis of Organic Body and Inorganic Environment

The sense of fusion between an organic character and his inorganic surroundings becomes a central theme in Silent Era adaptations of such novels as *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Notre Dame de Paris*, and *Fall of the House of Usher* because of its intriguing visual potential. *Usher* in particular provides a powerful example of a symbiotic relationship between a monster figure and his environment. Both 1928 adaptations chose to locate Roderick’s “deformity” in the disturbed and deteriorating form of the House. As Roderick’s double, it bears the corporeal traces of his unbalanced psyche. Poe’s ambiguous but evocative description of Roderick is rather closely echoed in the casting and makeup decisions made in these two films, and in later sound versions as well. Conveying the narrator’s initial impressions on seeing his friend again after a lapse of many years, Poe emphasises Roderick’s unnaturally pale complexion, emaciated frame, and wild, web-like hair that “floated rather than fell about his face”. The narrator notes that “the character of his face had been at all times remarkable”, and his features included “an inordinate expansion above the regions of the temple”, large, luminous eyes, and thin lips “of a surpassingly beautiful curve.”²⁹⁰ He concludes that Roderick’s overall appearance conflicts “with

²⁹⁰ Poe, *Usher* 13.

any idea of simple humanity.” This description links back to the narrator’s far more detailed description of the House, only a couple of pages earlier:

Its principal feature seemed to be that of an excessive antiquity... Minute fungi overspread the whole exterior, hanging in a fine tangled web-work from the eaves. Yet all this was apart from any extraordinary dilapidation. No portion of the masonry had fallen; and there appeared to be a wild inconsistency between its still perfect adaptation of parts, and the crumbling condition of the individual stones...the eye of a scrutinising observer might have discovered a barely perceptible fissure, which, extending from the roof of the building in front, made its way down the wall in a zigzag direction, until it became lost in the sullen waters of the tarn.²⁹¹

There is a similarity in tone and even word choice between the two descriptions that instantly hints that the bond between the House and Roderick lies far deeper than a shared name. Although Roderick is not disabled or deformed he shares enough of the House’s otherworldly, unsettling and unhealthy qualities to appear anything but conventional or socially adequate. In fact, he hardly leaves the House at all - a feature that links him to deformed monsters like Erik (*Phantom*) and Quasimodo (*Notre Dame*), who are unable to survive in the world beyond their self-contained, terrarium-like environments.

Cinematography and special effects play a crucial role in constructing this mode of representation, but the impact of the physical sets and props incorporated into the final image should not be underestimated. The shooting style of the film works in close correspondence with the style of the sets and props to build an atmosphere of spatial ambiguity while highlighting the symbolic value of every detail that appears on camera. To some degree, such concerns must be addressed in any film, but they gain a much greater weight in the films under the consideration, when the environment becomes more than a background for the action, but a figurative

²⁹¹ Poe, *Usher* 6.

character, or extension of the character, i.e. the monster figure, and is imbued with its own energy, and even its own expressive features, akin to a human actor's facial expressions and gestures, that visually reveal its personality and spiritual condition.

Similarly to the way in which *Phantom of the Opera*'s Erik and *Hunchback of Notre Dame*'s Quasimodo interact symbiotically with their environments, constructing and being constructed by them, Roderick Usher is connected to his House on a variety of physical, emotional, psychological and symbolic levels. They share the same name, the same affliction, and ultimately the same fate. Although in Poe's text, Roderick's complexly interwoven network of doppelgängers includes his twin sister Madeline, the narrator, and the House, both films choose the House as the primary locus of Roderick's duality. This choice of emphasis is especially appropriate in a silent film context, providing the most visually immersive form of duality and the one requiring the least verbal expression. The language in which the House communicates with Roderick is not a language of words, but of images and movements, admitting the viewer into the innermost recesses of Roderick's psyche by echoing his moods, thoughts, and perceptions. There is no need for him to explain his state of mind, or describe what he sees and hears to us, because we can share these experiences with him by reading them in his environment.

VI.4.2. The Monster's Body as Architecture

While a building can take on personified features to indicate its symbiosis with its human occupants, the reverse can occur as well. Monsters who are intimately connected with specific buildings sometimes imbibe references to their features into

their own bodies, seeming to turn into architectural, sculptural, or design elements themselves. *Notre Dame de Paris*'s twisted, hideous Quasimodo embodies some of the iconography of a classic Gothic gargoyles or chimera and films often show him squatting on the cathedral's parapet alongside his stone counterparts.



Figure 66: Quasimodo (Lon Chaney) fusing with the architecture of the Cathedral in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (Worsley, 1923). Screen grabs taken by author.



The famous cathedral itself is an important participant in the action, much like the Paris Opera House in *Phantom of the Opera*, and plays a pivotal role in the lives of all the central characters. It is an inextricable part of Quasimodo - in essence, his entire universe. Taken in by Frollo as an infant, he knows no other home than the bell tower and no other purpose other than to ring its bells. He is the voice of the cathedral and its eyes as well, as he watches the world outside concealed by the height of his bell tower and the deep shadows of the aisles.

Dracula, as depicted in F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922), is also inseparable from his castle although he is shown leaving it and departing for distant lands. He carries crates of his native earth with him when he travels, so he is never truly separated from the body of his home. When he is shown within the castle, he is stylistically unified with the set, allowing him to complement its shapes and vanish into its fabric at will. His narrow, angular form and exaggerated facial features turn him into a Gothic statue and his meticulously arranged framing in pointed doorways and windows makes him seem like a moving piece of stained glass. Every gesture and pose is carefully planned and structured to create a specific shape within the frame or to throw a particular shadow. He is frequently placed in windows, doorways, and arches that surround his figure with oppressively structured negative space that seems to both imprison him in the coffin-like confines of his immortality and showcase his unnaturalness to the other characters. These qualities are both visible in a scene where he gazes at the doomed Ellen through the window of a neighbouring house. His face and splayed hands fill the confined space of the window, but just as he takes over the frame, he is also crushed by it, almost clawing his way out in desperation. He is an embodiment and personification of his castle and the

surrounding landscape. The sets become more than architectural and natural features characterising his native environment. They are part of his essence.



Figure 67: Dracula/Count Orlock (Max Schreck) framed by architectural elements in *Nosferatu* (Murnau,1922). Screen grabs taken by author.



When he travels abroad, he takes not only his boxes of soil, but also the Gothic columns of the ship's masts, the pointed arches of the coffins and the gloomy clouds

of the sky. In a now-famous low-angle shot aboard the ship taking him to Germany, he slowly crosses the frame, his long nails unfolded, his dark silhouette isolated and emphasised by the light background of the sky. The rigging of the ship crisscrosses behind his back like a web, merging with his form to suggest the image of an enormous spider. The scene is shot from below, its uncanny atmosphere simultaneously highlighting the character's detachment from humanity and his overbearing power.



Figure 68: Count Orlock (Max Schrek) and the rigging of the *Demeter* in *Nosferatu* (Murnau, 1922). Screen grab taken by author.

It is hard to judge the precise stylistic connection between the character and architectural environment in *Drakula halála* but it seems that it was emphasised there as well. The castle Drakula brings Mary to is described by Páncézl as a “palace” with

weird architecture, its phantastic illumination reminded her of the strange realms that appear in fairy tales. And then she smelled a weird and rank odour in Drakula's castle, the smell of death and decay. This heavy, suffocating smell nearly intoxicated the mentally-broken young maiden."²⁹²

She is both horrified and intoxicated, a response similar to that elicited by her first meeting with Drakula himself. The whimsy of the set reflects the illusory world of his deranged mind and extravagantly menacing attitude.

Echoing Dracula's connection with his Gothic castle, *The Phantom of the Opera's* Erik merges with the Baroque structure of the Paris Opera House. If Dracula turns into a stained glass window, Erik entwines himself with a bronze statue of Apollo on the Opera's roof as he watches Christine and Raoul's secret tryst. Leroux's description of "an immense night-bird that stared at them with its blazing eyes and seemed to cling to the strings of Apollo's lyre" is turned into a dramatic scene in the 1925 adaptation starring Lon Chaney.²⁹³ Like the preceding masquerade sequence, the scene is tinted to show Erik's crimson Red Death costume in full colour, blazing like fire as he towers over the two unsuspecting lovers. Operating as a single organism with the Opera, Erik uses it as an extension of his own limited body. When attacking the audience with the chandelier or manipulating lighting levels to aid his schemes he appropriates the building's functions and appendages. In a symbiotic exchange he utilises the Opera's existing features and enhances them with his own abilities and motivations, as when he turns the still, underground lake into a lethal trap by concealing himself beneath the surface.

²⁹² Rhodes 40.

²⁹³ Leroux 154.

VI.4.3. The Theory of “Photogenicie” and Erasing the Distinction Between Animate and Inanimate Entities

Affective atmosphere born out of distortions of space, time and environment plays a famously central role in all the works of Edgar Allen Poe, so it is unsurprising that adaptations of his material would be attempted by filmmakers interested in experimenting with the construction of subjective reality, the destabilisation of space, and “the dynamics of human perception” on screen.²⁹⁴ This process of using cinematic techniques to de-familiarise and “make subjective” manifests itself vividly in both films, ranging from the universal to the infinitesimal.

Epstein uses the surrounding natural environment as a symbolic extension of the House and of Roderick, employing parallel techniques of editing and camera movement in interior and exterior shots to disorient the viewer and create a space that is constantly in motion and is never concretely defined. The interiors are permeated with nervous, volatile energy. Floor-length curtains flutter with increasing menace at open windows, and mounds of dry leaves sweep soundlessly along deserted passageways, as though the House were already falling into ruin. The sensation of disturbed equilibrium is enhanced by the movements of the camera itself. There are numerous tracking shots where the camera literally follows not only the physical trajectories of characters and objects, but seems to mirror their emotion or meaning for the characters, as when it races with mounting urgency after the trailing leaves, or stalks behind Roderick’s back as he heads towards his fatal painting.

²⁹⁴ Timothy Corrigan and Patricia White, *The Film Experience: An Introduction* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2004) 363.

Webber and Watson push their cinematography to even more disorienting extremes as well as experimenting with a different kind of movement through the use of distorting lenses and prisms. Epstein, although interested in exploring the technical and representational capabilities of film, strove to use the techniques available to him in a much more subtle and transparent way.²⁹⁵ In this sense he is at odds with an existing tendency in French narrative avant-garde film to use the story as a framework for technical experimentation and allow cinematic language itself to become the subject of the film.²⁹⁶ In *Usher*, Epstein's experiments still serve the narrative and the characters rather than the other way around. Webber and Watson on the other hand, demonstrate the privileging of technique over narrative to a much greater extent. Working with significantly more modest means than Epstein, they have almost no exterior shots, setting all of the action within the boundaries of the House itself. As Watson himself admits, the film's radically experimental cinematography and highly stylised sets were due in large part to the limited resources available to the production, the dubious quality of the equipment used, and the severe limitations of the shooting space.²⁹⁷ Many of the effects used served the dual purpose of establishing a surreal artistic vision and covering up the physical deficiencies of the sets.

Moving freely within the elaborate architecture of his very substantial sets, Epstein uses establishing shots sparingly and strategically, in the interest of maintaining the eerie ambiguity of his space. Webber and Watson avoid establishing shots altogether, eschewing specific spatial relationships in favour of an almost dematerialised environment, broken by prisms, non-continuous editing, and multi-

²⁹⁵ Guido 154-5; Cortade 162.

²⁹⁶ Abel, *French Film Theory* 290.

²⁹⁷ Watson 887.

layered superimpositions into a state of near abstraction. The bold, graphic design of the sets defies all sense of depth or perspective, and almost every shot is either kaleidoscopically multiplied by a prism or partially veiled by superimposed fragments of human bodies and architectural elements. Constantly undermined by extreme effects, melting and materialising images, and a shifting, unstable environment, the eye of the camera becomes as unreliable as the voice of Poe's narrator, or the disturbed perceptions of Roderick himself. The spatial relationships are so distorted that the space itself becomes illusory, creating a floating world that is not bound by the laws of gravity or time, simultaneously decomposing and regenerating.



Figure 69: Prisms, editing and set design creating a dematerialised environment in *The Fall of the House of Usher* (Watson and Webber, 1928). Hildegard Watson as Madeline. Screen grab taken by author.

Epstein's use of close-ups of sets and props mirrors his approach to close-ups of actors and ties in to the theory of *photogenie*. As elucidated in Epstein's own writings, this theory posits that the camera is inherently capable of lending

significance and aesthetic value to the seemingly prosaic by revealing hidden levels within objects and individuals.²⁹⁸ Epstein applies this principle indiscriminately to both animate and inanimate entities, erasing the distinction between the two. Ultimately, the intricate lighting and cinematic techniques explored in both films focus on revealing the hidden emotional lives of the characters or conveying the hidden life and energy of seemingly inanimate objects, allowing the viewer to feel the unity of Roderick and the House.



Figure 70: Hidden layers of meaning and symbolism explored through closeups in *La Chute de la Maison Usher* (Epstein, 1928). Screen grab taken by author.

VI.5. Demonic Spaces

The importance of architecture in the formation of the cinematic monster extends also to the concept and representation of space more generally. Spaces relevant to the

²⁹⁸ Aitken; Abel *French Cinema* 280-7; Jean Epstein, "Photogenie and the Imponderable," *French Film Theory and Criticism: a History/Anthology, 1907-1939*, ed. Richard Abel (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1988) 188-92; Wall-Romana 51-72.

monster figure can be divided between interior and exterior: Interior spaces are places of creative expression or concealment and the monster interacts with them in a very immediate way; exterior spaces include “the metropolis” and the expanses of the country landscape. A monster may not be as much a part of exterior spaces as interior ones, but his symbolic and spiritual connection with them can be as profound. David Spurr’s idea of the retreat into architectural interiors as spaces for subjective and private meaning can be applied to exteriors as well.²⁹⁹

VI.5.1. The Interior as Space for Subjective Meaning

The interior of Jekyll’s laboratory is traditionally the most important set in a *Jekyll and Hyde* film. It is a large part of Jekyll’s image, the scene of most of his onscreen transformations, and in many ways an externalisation of his mind. It is an environment that is inhabited and constructed exclusively by him (and Hyde) and bears the marks of his fluctuating identity. When the audience is first invited into this sanctum, it is usually shown as a highly functional, structured space. The neat, linear shelves lining the walls serve as both a repository and a showcase for rows of mysterious bottles and test tubes, testifying to Jekyll’s scientific pursuits as well as his organised, conservative mind. It is from among these bottles that Jekyll draws the components for his mixture, making the set itself an integral part of his upcoming transformation.

Unsurprisingly, the violent, unrestrained Hyde lashes out against this balanced environment, wreaking havoc and destruction on the geometry of the shelves in much the same way that he attacks Jekyll’s mental balance and self-awareness.

²⁹⁹ Spurr “Preface” ix.

Breaking bottles and spilling their contents on the floor, he attacks the very substances that have made his existence possible. In fact, the image of Hyde wrecking Jekyll's meticulously structured laboratory, absent from Stevenson's novel, becomes a ubiquitous element in film adaptations early on, as a violent symbol of the scientist's mind turning upon itself.

The main identifying characteristics of the set (glass vessels of various shapes distributed among shelves or tabletops, and an organised linear structuring of the space), and its narrative/symbolic functions (as the site of the first transformation, and a reflection of Jekyll's self-perception, later vandalised by Hyde), remain consistent across the range of silent Jekyll and Hyde adaptations. The exact presentation of these elements depends on the style of the film and its interpretation of the Jekyll/Hyde figure.



Figure 71: The laboratory set in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Henderson, 1912). James Cruze as Jekyll. Screen grab taken by author.

The short 1912 Henderson/Cruze film, with its theatrical, almost two-dimensional backdrops and rigidly fixed camera already has these features firmly in place. The back wall of the laboratory, which accounts for the majority of the set, is riddled with shelves displaying a procession of evenly-spaced bottles. Jekyll's creation of his formula is presented in a very direct, almost didactic manner - rather like a scientific presentation. Hyde's later attack on the laboratory is very obviously and thoughtfully staged as well. All the furniture is carefully shifted out of view to accommodate the only available camera angle, leaving only a small stool to assist the stunted Hyde in reaching the higher shelves.

The demure, philanthropic Victorian gentleman created by King Baggott in the Brenon/Baggott version inhabits an appropriately Victorian space. The necessary shelves and tables are present, but they are all ludicrously small and ornate, and his chair has leather cushions set in an elaborately carved frame. Every surface is crammed with indiscernible trinkets, a lamp with an oversized fringed lampshade dominates his desk, and a heavy, embroidered curtain renders the room stuffy and dim. Both films use the laboratory as the setting for Jekyll's first transformation into Hyde and both include a sequence in which Hyde attacks the set and its contents, symbolically lashing out against Jekyll himself.

The 1920 Robertson/Barrymore film and the 1925 Stan Laurel parody, *Dr. Pyckle and Mr. Pride* both feature spacious, richly detailed and textured sets.

Robertson/Barrymore's laboratory is an austere space, full of complex scientific equipment and of course a proliferation of shelves. The inherent sense of foreboding is heightened by the contrast between the practical scientific contents of the room and its cavernous structure. The castle-like stone walls and murky lighting make it

feel almost like an underground vault or cave. The vessels and mysterious devices lining the walls are not the delicate miniature vials of the Brenon/Baggott version – they glint in the dim light with the heavy sheen of polished metal and thick glass.



Figure 72: The ominous laboratory set in John S. Robertson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1920). John Barrymore as Jekyll. Screen grab taken by author.

Subtle references to Gothic architecture are interspersed throughout the laboratory and the passage leading down to it from Jekyll's house. The sense of duality is further enhanced by the appearance of Jekyll's sitting room. Much less stark than the laboratory, it has a homely, intimate feel, with a soft carpet and cushioned chairs, betraying the presence of another, more sensual and comfort-loving side to Jekyll's nature. He is obviously not so deeply lost in the noble pursuits of his mind as to disdain the bodily comfort of a cozy armchair and the warm glow of a large fireplace. *Dr. Pyckle and Mr Pride* summarises the conventions established within

the preceding twenty years (especially those seen in the popular Robertson/Barrymore film), exaggerating and overemphasising them for humorous effect. The laboratory itself is quite small, but it is crammed full of every stereotypical scientific reference imaginable, combining an incongruous mixture of test tubes, bottles, anatomical charts, plaster busts, books, and random apparatuses.

On the opposite side of the stylistic spectrum lies the modernised approach. Perhaps in an attempt to add a new twist to over-familiar material, or to evade accusations of copyright infringement (as in the case of F.W. Murnau), a few filmmakers chose to transfer the narrative to a later time period. This decision frequently coincides with other significant deviations from the original novella, from changes of names and locations to alterations of major plot points. The 1920 Hayden/Lewis version introduces costumes contemporary to the production and a framing device that turns the whole experience into a bad dream. The laboratory is still there in its accustomed role, but the usual tables and shelves are replaced with double-shelved trollies, possibly to epitomise modern efficiency. Murnau's *Der Januskopf*, made the same year, renames all of the characters and connects the transformation to supernatural influences. This does not mean however, that the laboratory set is absent, as evidenced by a still showing Conrad Veidt working intently with an elaborate glass contraption containing dark fluid. Although the costumes are decidedly modernised, other stills show a fanciful approach in some of the sets, such as an outdoor square with an obelisk in the centre that figures in a dramatic dream sequence.

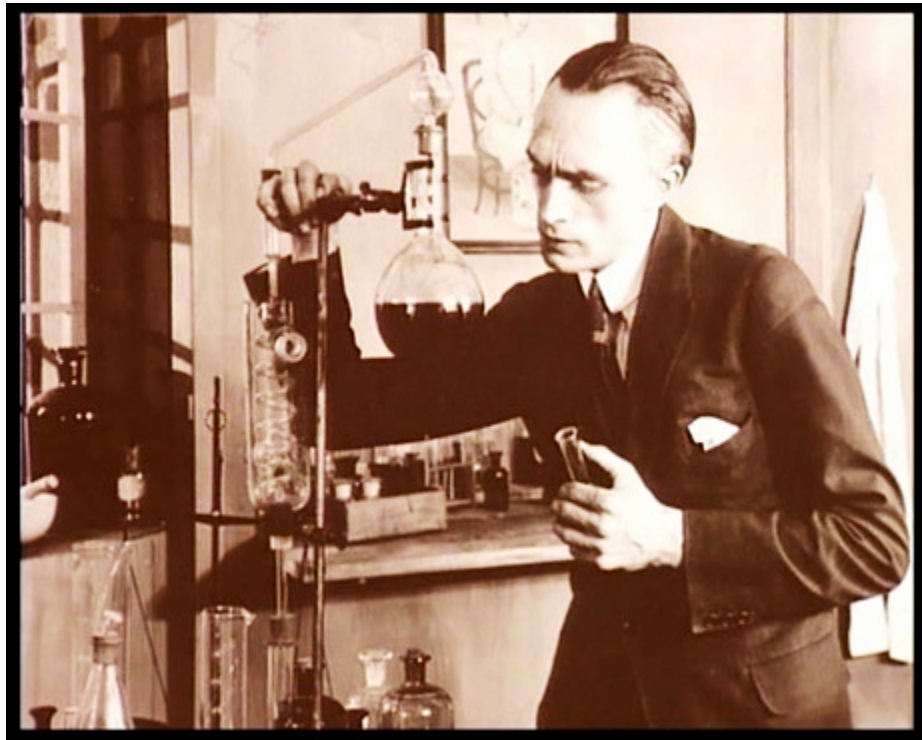


Figure 73: Conrad Veidt as Dr. Warren/Dr. Jekyll (top) and as Mr. O'Connor/Mr. Hyde (bottom) in *Der Januskopf* (Murnau, 1920). Lost film. Publicity stills.



The modernisation evident in *Der Andere* (1913) comes from the Paul Lindau play on which it is based, which in turn used the themes explored in *Jekyll and Hyde*

to comment on modern society. As Hallers (the film and play's Jekyll figure) is a lawyer rather than a doctor, the laboratory as such is seemingly rendered unnecessary. It is very enlightening to observe however, that while it is absent in its literal sense, it is still very much there in spirit. Hallers's study takes up the niche vacated by the laboratory, absorbing all of its principal functions. A large fireplace warms it with its glow, a Grecian-style sculpture features prominently in the frame, a set of candles is held by an ornate silver candelabrum, and a pair of lacy curtains shades the window. When the room is first shown, Hallers is seated in an armchair by the fire, dictating a letter to his secretary. Illustrating wealth, comfort, well-being and authority, the room represents Hallers's career and personal dignity in the same way that Jekyll's laboratory represents his scientific mind and experimental pursuits. Hallers and his doppelgänger interact with the set in contrasting manners and the room also provides the Other with his disguise, directly aiding his transformation like Jekyll's laboratory. Transforming into the Other, he changes into his secretary's coat (left behind in the all-important study). The coat grows increasingly bedraggled and worn out by the Other's nocturnal exploits, accompanying him to disreputable pubs where he consorts with thieves and disgraced servant girls. This abrupt shift in costume style and social sphere makes it clear that his transformation entails not simply a personality change, but a class change as well. The symbolic role of the study finally comes full circle when it is broken into by the Other, who comes as a burglar to threaten Hallers's authority and affluence just like Hyde threatens Jekyll's scientific integrity.

In the loose 1914 *Phantom* adaptation, *Phantom of the Violin*, Ellis (this version's Erik) and his dungeons give an example of an interior that is more

deformed than the monster himself. The film bears only a skeletal relationship to Leroux's novel and eschews the idea of physical aberration altogether. Ellis's profound emotional disturbance fills the void left by the absent deformity. He is as much socially disabled by his self-destructive tendencies and vivid hallucinations as Erik is by his frightening face. The few stills that survive from this lost film show glimpses of the crypt-like environment into which Ellis escapes after his unsuccessful suicide attempt. A brief *Motion Picture News* summary describes it as the cellar of "an old castle", the upper regions of which have now been re-purposed for a modern cabaret.³⁰⁰ A more detailed *Moving Picture World* review labels it more specifically as an "old and forgotten crypt", also citing the presence of "white bones."³⁰¹



Figure 74: The catacombs in *The Phantom of the Violin* (Universal 1914), directed by Francis Ford. Francis Ford as Ellis and Grace Cunrad as Rosa. Lost film. Publicity still.³⁰²

³⁰⁰ Peter Milne, "Rev. of 'The Phantom Violin', dir. Francis Ford," *Motion Picture News* 24 Oct. 1914.

³⁰¹ "Rev. of 'The Phantom of the Violin', dir. Francis Ford," *The Moving Picture World* 26 Sept. 1914.

³⁰² Still reprinted in Tag Gallagher, "Senses of Cinema – Brother Feeney — Francis Ford," *Senses of Cinema*, 7 July 2015 <<http://sensesofcinema.com/2009/feature-articles/brother-feeney-francis-ford/>>.

The depiction of Ellis's feverish visions and the moody dungeon-like sets raise the interesting suggestion that the idea of deformity is still there, only it is mapped onto Ellis's environment rather than his own body. As Ellis descends into insanity, unable to cope with his wife's betrayal, his surroundings grow increasingly grotesque and distorted reflecting his deteriorating mental state. The bones materialise into talking skeletons, lamenting their fates and telling Ellis of their past lives.³⁰³ In effect, the suicidal Ellis is already buried alive, surrounded by funereal imagery and communing with mouldering corpses.

While the broader spaces of *Phantom* adaptations convey atmosphere and mood, the personal, interior spaces of individual characters wordlessly reveal details of their personalities and thoughts. In the Julian/Chaney film, Ben Carré's sets and props make thoughtful use of shapes, lines and textures to define characters through their personal spaces. The structure of Erik's hidden lair is highly linear and angular, with exposed stone walls, dark curtains and candle holders on the walls that bring to mind torch brackets in medieval castles. The minimalist furnishings emphasise the literal and emotional coldness of the space and its isolation from the flamboyant public spaces and cozy dressing rooms of the upper regions. The main room and its adjoining apartments are a veritable mind-map of Erik's talents and fears. A music alcove contains an organ with reams of sheet music and a violin hangs from a nearby music stand. A visit to his bedroom reveals walls swathed in heavy, funereal draperies and a large coffin-bed on a stepped platform flanked by colossal candles. As Erik leads Christine into his domain it feels as though she is trapped inside his mind rather than a physical environment. This space challenges the lavish

³⁰³ Gallagher.

complacency of the Opera's public facade while absorbing and reflecting its musical aura and dramatic exaggeration in a darker, inverted form. Erik's home is the warped double of the operatic stage above and Erik is the twisted analogy of a masked, costumed actor, performing his musical masterpieces in front an absent audience.

Christine's personal space, represented by her dressing room, is highly feminine and soft. Every suggestion of an angle or straight line is smothered in light-coloured fabrics. The harshness of the walls is obliterated by flowing draperies that curve gently over the doorway, swallowing its geometric outlines. Lace covers the tables and cushioned chairs and delicate vases stand neatly aligned on the mantelpiece. All of the tables and armchairs are low and everything is curved, round or oval-shaped. The overall atmosphere is simultaneously romantic and cozy - the antithesis of Erik's disquieting minimalism. Christine's dressing room is a monument to traditional ideals of femininity, characterising its occupant as fragile, sensitive and capable of providing a well-ordered, inviting home for her future husband. If Erik's room is a crypt, Christine's is a warm nest.

In the Julian/Chaney film, the contrast between the depiction of Erik and Christine's design aesthetics grows even more intriguing when the two collide within a single space. When Erik brings Christine into his subterranean world, he makes it clear that she will not be expected to sleep in a coffin in a bare stone room. Erik's version of Christine's bedroom is a remarkably detailed and profoundly insightful piece of design by Carré that speaks volumes about both characters and their fundamental inability to forge a genuine connection. Demonstrating a willingness to compromise in his own twisted way, Erik creates an oasis of romantic fantasy in the midst of the stony monumentality of his realm. On the surface, the room he offers

Christine looks little like the spaces that he himself inhabits. The imposing stone walls are concealed beneath voluminous curtains that mimic the light draperies of Christine's dressing room. An enormous boat-shaped bed dominates the space, looming incongruously over dainty, baroque-style ornate furniture, vases bursting with large flowers and shelves upon shelves of glittering ladies' slippers. Self-consciously extravagant and unintentionally parodic, it is suffocating rather than snug, filtering the familiar attributes of Christine's dressing room through the distorted lens of Erik's vision. A hand mirror with her name on it and a wedding dress draped carelessly over a chair testify silently to the obsessive and misguided longing behind the hand that laid them there. They are both desperate attempts to attach her symbolically to the artificial habitat he has meticulously created for her.

Carré Carré's sets complement Chaney's performance, building facets of Erik's character even when he is off-screen. In all its ludicrous grandeur, the bedroom set illustrates Erik's attempts to give Christine everything he *believes* she needs. It is an inanimate double for his vision of her in the same way that her dressing room doubles her own self-perception. Erik's fantasy Christine is a sparkling shard of the Opera's brilliance, a muse and a beautiful musical instrument rather than a simple young girl who wants to marry her childhood sweetheart and become a dutiful wife and nurturing mother.

VI.5.2. The Exterior as Monstrous Universe and Place of Rejection

The larger exterior environments that the monster encounters or exists in are the metropolis and the country or rural environment. Cultural stereotypes frequently

associate the urban environment with evil and corruption and the rural environment with goodness and peace. In silent film this is strongly reflected in F.W. Murnau's *Sunrise* (1927). At the same time, "monstrous" exteriors are more complex and controversial.

Dracula, Jekyll/Hyde, Erik, Quasimodo, Orlac and Gwynplaine are all monsters associated with urban environments. As noted by Penz and Thomas, "After 1918, the metropolis is no longer a place for the idler searching for amusement, excitement and diversion, but a horror-scenario for its frightened and threatened inhabitants. The present reality is neither idyllic nor prosperous, but rather a regressive/aggressive infernal pandemonium."³⁰⁴ Discussing German "street films" of the early 1920s, they emphasise that these films usually depict

broken souls and inhabitants of the dark quarters of life on 'skid row'. Frequently, the main characters are cripples, underdogs, outcasts, criminals, lonesome creatures of the night and lunatics. The majority of these (anti)heroes with ill-fated destinies live on the shabby side of the city, behind the splendour of the grand city boulevards, where the sun apparently never shines. The rainy, dimly lit city defeats these street creatures. If one notices a horizon at all, one usually sees symbolic and grotesque silhouettes, graphically bold images, which project the protagonist's feelings and fears.³⁰⁵

A similar vision of the city appears in silent monster films. Orlac in *Orlacs Hände* (1924) becomes one of the shadows of the cold, dark and empty city while lurking in search of the truth of his monstrous nature. The shady, narrow streets leading to the house of Orlac's father are lit only in places by narrow windows, the road twisting precariously off into the darkness. Although less sharply stylised, it is reminiscent of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. The underground pub in which the villainous Nera blackmails Orlac is very dimly lit, with a low-hanging ceiling and an organic feel to

³⁰⁴ François Penz and Maureen Thomas, *Cinema & Architecture: Méliès, Mallet-Stevens, Multimedia* (London: British Film Institute, 1997) 12.

³⁰⁵ Penz and Thomas 13.

the walls and niches that makes it feel like a natural cave. Using less exaggerated images than in his earlier film, Wiene continues to explore the idea of cinematic spaces that reveal the personalities or intentions of their inhabitants. The sharp angles and uncertain light of the forbidding streets reflect Orlac's anxiety, fear, and trauma, becoming a reflection of his troubled mind.

In *Jekyll and Hyde* films, Hyde's nightly excursions into dangerous and sinful parts of London emphasise the degradation of his nature. The duality of the character is reflected in the duality of London, with Jekyll inhabiting respectable, upscale neighbourhoods shown in daylight and Hyde skulking in brothels and opium dens in the middle of the night. In *Nosferatu* the face of the city invaded by the vampire is represented by the anonymous, faceless coffins of plague victims trailing in a procession down an empty street. In this case, the city inhabited by the monster transforms to reflect his evil or sinful mind. For Erik and Quasimodo, the city rejects them keeping them imprisoned in their interior spaces. Stepping into the wider world is mortally dangerous for them. Shown throughout Worsley/Chaney's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* in darkened interiors or nighttime scenes, Quasimodo's face and figure are moulded by contrasting shadows generated by candlelight, torchlight, or moonlight. His few appearances in exterior, urban settings all occur in perilous, dramatic contexts, usually in harsh daylight and are almost invariably scenes of humiliation and abuse for Quasimodo. Like other Gothic monsters, he is a child of the night; the bright daylight and openness of public urban space exposes him in all his hideousness, leaving him vulnerable. A vivid exception to this pattern occurs in his daring rescue of the condemned Esmeralda - the moment when he

confronts the daylight and the jeering crowd and comes out victorious, but only for a little while.

For many silent film monsters, the city outside becomes a bigger and more destructive monster than the one hiding inside. Alone in the clutch of the metropolis, the monster experiences the “unfounded homesickness” described by David Sorfa as emanating from “threatening urban spaces.” Such spaces make one feel uncomfortable and a “stranger” although he has no other home to go back to.³⁰⁶ The city is a place of trauma, but at the same time it is a place of liberation where evil influences destroy moral boundaries, creating a monstrous environment that breeds more monsters of its own.

The country landscape in most silent monster films (particularly those I have focused on) often lacks a strong contrast with the metropolis, along conventional lines of countryside equaling non-threatening peace and goodness and urban areas representing danger, evil, etc. Since it is presented as part of the monster’s evil or deformity rather than a pure and peaceful place that he invades and destroys it is his territory already. For instance, one of the most distinctive features of Nosferatu’s set design is Murnau’s brilliant use of suggestive but undistorted natural landscapes, such as the jagged cliffs and stiflingly overhanging storm clouds that surround Orlock’s castle, or the “idyllic island” of Ellen’s sunlight garden. Genuine landscapes rather than studio-built sets are especially important in creating the realm of Dracula/Orlock.

³⁰⁶ David Sorfa, “Architottrure: Jan Svankmajer and Surrealist Film,” *Screening the City*, ed. Tony Fitzmaurice and Mark Shiel (London: Verso, 2003) 100–112.



Figure 75: A rural landscape reflecting the vampire's sinister influence in *Nosferatu* (Murnau, 1922). Greta Schröder as Ellen/Mina. Screen grab taken by author.

Shot in the murky natural light of dusk or dawn, the stark forests and lowering clouds around Orlock's castle create an ominous, mythological atmosphere. The weighty, dark mass of the mountains emerges out of the mist, making palpable the physical and spiritual distance between the neat, rural houses of the start of the film and the epic desolation of the castle's ancient walls. The monumentality and primeval austerity of the landscape is used to foreshadow the darkness to come, even as the sunlight still shines on the guileless Hutter. Filmed in long, brooding takes this imagery conveys a different kind of expressionism from the one achieved by artistically distorted sets in a studio. Lost in the wild darkness of nature, the viewer is given a glimpse of the timeless, animalistic world of the vampire's lost soul. The

significance of the “sublime”, emotive power of nature in Murnau’s use of landscape has been commented upon by Ian Roberts.³⁰⁷

VI.5.3. The Dualistic Wall: Transgressing Boundaries Between Interior and Exterior

An important facet of the monster’s integration with interior and exterior spaces is the effect of the “smeared boundary” or “dualistic wall” as discussed by Katherine Shonfield in her study of Roman Polanski’s *Repulsion* (1965) and *Rosemary’s Baby* (1968). She discusses the use of architectural interiors to represent the bodily and psychological interiors of the heroines and their fears of sexual and social invasion. Walls melt or become “viscous” as noises and external influences penetrate into the personal spaces (usually bedrooms) of the victimised heroines in much the same way that *Phantom of the Opera*’s Erik’s voice enters Christine’s dressing room.³⁰⁸ The smearing, breaking, blurring and transgression of boundaries is one of the most traditional functions of the monster figure as he tests the borders between human and non-human, self and other, fear and desire, reality and fantasy. Through cinematic language, this feature takes on a visual (and later aural) dimension through the representation and subversion of architectural elements and spaces. By demonstrating the permeability of Christine’s dressing room walls, Erik fuses his world with her own, using music to lure her into his inner realm.

Shonfield also explores an idea that, especially in the context of monstrous spaces, can be described as the duality of the wall. She notes that every wall has both

³⁰⁷ Roberts 45.

³⁰⁸ Katherine Shonfield, *Walls Have Feelings: Architecture, Film and the City* (London: Routledge, 2000) 55-74.

an inside and an outside aspect each facing, and incorporated into, a different kind of space. In the infinitely dualistic world of *Phantom* adaptations, the two-faced wall is the ultimate architectural analogy to the masked Erik. The walls of Christine's dressing room are an integral part of her familiar, intimate space, giving her the illusion of privacy and protection. However, as Erik soon demonstrates, the very same walls grow foreign and terrifying when seen from the other side, where they join with his domain. The revelation of these unfamiliar walls is all the more frightening because of the knowledge that they had always been there in the first place, lurking just on the other side. Even before Christine snatches away Erik's mask, she has already seen another unmasking on a far grander scale, having witnessed the distorted, hidden "face" of the Paris Opera House itself. Just as Erik's mask gains in dread from the memory of what lies beneath, Christine's walls grow more uncanny after the exposure of their unreliability and the horrors they conceal.

In Leroux's novel music and speech are used as powerful weapons to undermine the integrity of the wall. Erik's supernaturally beautiful voice and the sound of his violin seep insidiously through the solid walls into Christine's room long before he makes a physical appearance. Leroux suggests that Christine is hypnotised/possessed by this disembodied music, forcing her to forsake her friends and her own better judgment. Raoul's use of the word "ecstasy" to describe Christine's mesmerised state implies both sexual and religious connotations as well as a total loss of reason and self-control. By allowing Erik's dangerous music to pass through unhindered, the wall surrenders its function as a protective barrier and becomes a vehicle for conveying Erik's voice into Christine's room - she is not

shielded by her walls but *surrounded* by them and the secrets that lie within. The walls themselves are saturated and corrupted by Erik's music.

It is likely that this heavy reliance on music as a narrative and symbolic device in the novel was one of the reasons for its limited use in Silent Era adaptations.

Intriguingly, all of the cinematic variations of *Phantom* do address the mystique of the music-infused wall and its supernatural abilities - even those that cannot do this with the use of actual music. Even Ford's 1914 *Phantom of the Violin*, which differs significantly from *Phantom of the Opera* on numerous plot points, still makes a special effort to hinge the narrative on music and its performance. The set is a cabaret rather than an opera house, but it is still a building infused with music and supported by those who come to perform and listen to it. It is through music that Ellis the violinist bonds with his wife, Rosa. Here as well the wall serves as a treacherous vehicle when it reveals to Ellis the voice of his adulterous wife, burlesquing a song he had written for her when they were still together. The fusion of music and architecture comes full circle when Ellis lures Rosa into his symbolically-charged underground lair. She is driven mad by the sound of his violin and together they plunge "into the deepest hole of the lower regions", literally swallowed up by Ellis's twisted domain.³⁰⁹ Achieving the resolution planned by the deranged Ellis, they are absorbed by the building and the music that echoes through its walls. The medieval basements of the cabaret is haunted by the violent, premodern past they once witnessed, like the literary "demonic spaces" described by David Spurr, which

³⁰⁹ On the plot of *The Phantom of the Violin*, see Hanford C. Judson, "'The Phantom Violin': Universal Four-Part Special Picture by Grace Cunrad and Produced by Francis Ford tells a Strange, Unusual Story," *The Moving Picture World* 26 Sept. 1914; Milne; "Rev. of 'The Phantom of the Violin,'" *MPW* 26 Sept. 1914; and Nicolella 461-4.

absorb evil influences and infect those who come in contact with them.³¹⁰ In the case of *Phantom* adaptations, the infection is musical as well as historical.

The “architectural monster” - although seemingly based within a limited, confined environment – is part of a much larger mythological and ideational context. His micro-universe may be small, but he is its centre and it melds with him to manifest deep monstrous themes of duality, hybridity, social transgression, physical versus moral deformity and of course, death and decay. Via the projection of his monstrosity onto a wider and more diverse realm than a single human/humanoid body, the architectural monster in literature and cinema combines individual human struggles with powerful, underlying mythic themes that transcend time and setting.

³¹⁰ Spurr 73-98.

Chapter VII - Monstrous Hybridity and the Fear of Science

The 19th century Gothic literary monster and his silent film descendants are both frequently used as vehicles for discussing fears of scientific progress and hybridity through artificial intervention or unnatural devolution and mutation. In an active sense, science and technology play an important role in these narratives, either enabling the Monster's creation as in *Jekyll and Hyde*, *Frankenstein*, *The Hands of Orlac*, and *The Man Who Laughs*, or serving as weapons for his destruction as in *Dracula*. Late 19th and early 20th century explorations of human psychology, physiology and evolution, and widely publicised studies such as Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859), informed many fictional explorations of these themes in more passive and subtle ways as well.

Noel Carroll comments on unnatural hybridity as an effective strategy for constructing monsters across the arts and media in his *Philosophy of Horror*. He insists that a "Horrific Monster" must be threatening, and that regardless of whether the threat is physical or psychological, the monster himself must inspire revulsion and be perceived as "impure" or a "violation of nature." He elaborates that the most common method for representing this impurity is through the fusion of incompatible elements within a single being, creating hybridised categories such as "inside/outside, living/dead, insect/human, flesh/machine."³¹¹

Devoting a great deal of attention to the topic of hybridity in his analysis of grotesque elements in art and literature, McElroy attempts to create a system of classification. His gradations include: real or imaginary animals that combine

³¹¹ Carroll, *Philosophy of Horror* 42-3.

potential danger with a repugnant appearance, mythical hybrids of incompatible animal parts, human-animal composites, astonishingly and/or unnaturally deformed humans, and depictions that radically undermine the integrity of the human body, dignity, or identity.³¹² In Gothic literature and film, the undermining of the human body's integrity frequently occurs through scientific intervention.

Andriano focuses on hybridity in fictional tales of evolution/devolution; a symbolic perversion of biological processes that elicits fear and rejection. Such tales emphasise doubling and fusion between human and "beast" and are "reflections of our attempt to come to terms with human evolution, human animality." He explains that this type of doubling helps

us define who we are by displaying images that mingle humanity with animality. Often, the shape, behaviour, and fate of the monster reflect various misconceptions about evolution, from the delusion that, as the most highly evolved species, we are entirely separate and distinct from animals, to the notion that we may at any moment 'devolve', revert back into the savage beasts from which we evolved.³¹³

VII.1. Devolution and Mutation - The Monster as Grotesque Animal

Hybrid

According to Deborah Cartmell, images of mutated or hybridised bodies create a "breakdown of distinction between original and copy, self and other, human and monster." The repercussions of such transgressive entities include a "loss of authority and alienation."³¹⁴ The sense of loss of control is one of the facets

³¹² McElroy 11-2.

³¹³ Andriano "Preface."

³¹⁴ Cartmell 7.

contributing to the fear of scientific techniques capable of turning a human being into a hybrid or creating a new hybrid out of incongruous parts.

Hybridity is one of the key features uniting the monster with theories of the grotesque. The hybridity of the grotesque object is twofold as it exists both in the physical form of the object and in the confused perception of the viewer/reader. Wolfgang Kayser and other theorists have noted that while the element of comedy is essential, it must co-exist with the horrifying and the disgusting in order to be truly grotesque. Kayser connects the appearance of the grotesque in art and literature to historical periods of disorientation, conflict, and revolution and sees its hybridised nature as “an appropriate expression of the problematical nature of existence.”³¹⁵ It is the complexity of its inherent hybridity that sets the grotesque apart from crude comedy.

On a visual level, the notion of the hybridised, dismembered body, constructed out of incongruous and incompatible parts is omnipresent in artistic representations of both the monster and the grotesque. Mythic creatures such as the unicorn, the griffin, the centaur, and the mermaid, countless ancient deities and demons, the imps and spirits of folklore, the gargoyles and chimaeras of medieval Gothic cathedrals, and the inter-species amalgamations of Art Nouveau design, all follow this pattern.

The monster is always a hybrid, whether subtly or obviously and film plays an important role in bringing this feature to the fore. Where on paper a monster’s hybrid nature may be more conceptual and symbolic, as in the case of *Dracula*, the cinematic image gives it visual expression in a very literal way. By its nature the film medium is forced to look at the monster in ways that literature may not have had to

³¹⁵ Thomson 3.

address and the need for some sort of visual frame of reference arises. As a result of this need, filmmakers turn to centuries of grotesque representation in search of the design, body language, and physical presence of the cinematic monster, consequently raising his level of visual hybridity in the process.

This increased hybridity can manifest itself in a multitude of ways. Sometimes it seeps into the gestural language of the character, through movements and expressions that seem more animal than human, as in the ape-like choreography of Lon Chaney's Quasimodo in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1923). The traditional silent film representation of Hyde can also be connected directly to Andriano's "beast-monster" - a devolved, hybridised, barbaric Other that is still an inseparable part of the seemingly civilised and falsely confident Self. F.W. Murnau's vision of Dracula in *Nosferatu*, embraces Stoker's attempts to both mythologise and vilify the vampire by clearly hinting at his biologically non-human traits. Rejecting earlier "Byronic" vampire depictions, Stoker presents Dracula as "a cadaverous ancient with pointed ears, bad breath, and hairy palms."³¹⁶ Elements of physical peculiarity emerge strongly in Jonathan Harker's perception of Dracula when he has a chance to observe his host at close proximity during dinner:

His face was a strong - very strong - aquiline, with high bridge of the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils; with lofty domed forehead, and hair growing scantily round the temples, but profusely elsewhere. His eyebrows were very massive, almost meeting over the nose, and with bushy hair that seemed to curl in its profusion. The mouth, so far as I could see it under the heavy moustache, was fixed and rather cruel-looking, with peculiarly sharp white teeth; these protruded over the lips, whose remarkable ruddiness showed astonishing vitality in a man of his years. For the rest, his ears were pale and at the tops extremely pointed; the chin was broad and strong, and the cheeks firm though thin. The general effect was one of extraordinary pallor.³¹⁷

³¹⁶ Skal, *Hollywood Gothic* 5.

³¹⁷ Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2003) 29-30.

It is then that he notices that Dracula's hands, which "had seemed rather white and fine," are actually "broad, with squat fingers" and "hairs in the centre of the palm. The nails were long and fine, and cut to a sharp point."³¹⁸ Dracula's appearance gains more and more ominous features as further aspects of his nature are revealed. By the time Mina first sees him leaning over Lucy's unconscious form, he is "something" rather than "someone", with "a white face and red, gleaming eyes."³¹⁹

Skal relates Stoker's description to 19th century theories of physiognomy and criminology as well as equating Dracula with "the phallic goat-god Pan, the nightmare-demon of antiquity."³²⁰ Alongside such criminal and atavistic implications, Dracula's speech and self-presentation evoke deeper levels of complexity that belie his alarming appearance. The tension between his repugnant physical image and his sophisticated, poignant manner of expression leaves filmmakers with a conflicted portrayal that can be resolved in contrasting directions.

In her study of literary monsters on film, Bloom notes that each Dracula adaptation uses the opportunity to create a unique physical image. The vampire, regarded as a foreign disturber of traditional Victorian social life and morality, is made to appear physically distinct from the rest of the characters so that his "looks exemplify his unnatural state." She cites Murnau's version as "one of the strangest-looking ever filmed."³²¹ The approach taken by Murnau and actor Max Schrek is based on the more extreme end of Stoker's descriptive spectrum. Count Orlock's grotesquely exaggerated, animalistic visage clearly indicates that he is not human and that it would be impossible for him to integrate into modern human society.

³¹⁸ Stoker 30.

³¹⁹ Stoker 129.

³²⁰ Skal 52.

³²¹ Bloom 159.

Unlike Stoker's eccentric but superficially civil Dracula, Orlock manifests himself as an unnatural creature at first sight. Aside from the expected deathly pallor and dark-rimmed, deep-set eyes, Schrek wears a great deal of prosthetic makeup including a bald cap, sharply pointed ears, a hooked nose, prominent fangs and long false nails. In a notable departure from Dracula's long, sharp canines, Orlock's fangs are actually close-set central incisors. This alters the nature of his zoological association, making him look more like a rat or bat instead of a wolf or dog. The combination of rodent teeth, pointy ears, and clawed, paw-like hands fuses the vampire's human form with the rats that accompany him. It is hard to tell whether this fusion is emblematic of his mythic supernatural origin, his low parasitical nature, or his profound loneliness and isolation from humanity. In true grotesque fashion, the viewer is left wondering whether to laugh or cringe.



Figure 76: Max Schrek's makeup as Count Orlock/Dracula in *Nosferatu* (Murnau, 1922). Screen grab taken by author.

Judging by surviving publicity stills, the makeup design in *Drakula halála* was far less extreme. Paul Askonas as Drakula wears few prosthetics. He has no visible fangs, not even in a close-up photograph that shows his mouth wide open in a malicious grin. He is pale and dressed in black but otherwise resembles Stoker's Dracula in essence rather than in detail. His eyes, accented by bushy, sharply slanting eyebrows do have a demonic gleam, but he lacks a "long white moustache" or facial hair of any kind. It is not possible to judge the design of his nails as his hands are not clearly visible in any of the available stills. The faded, bleached-out look suggested by Stoker's phrase "without a single speck of colour about him anywhere" is replaced here by stark black-and-white contrasts. Askonas's whitewashed face is framed by dark, geometrically-shaped hair with a sharp widow's peak cutting across a receding hairline.

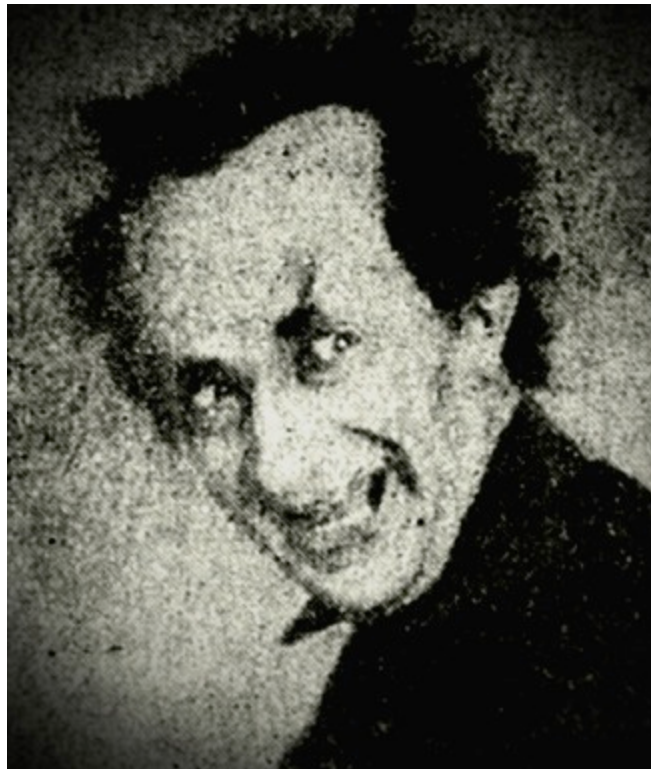


Figure 77: Publicity still of Paul Askonas as Drakula in *Drakula halála* (Lajthay, 1921).

The sense of abnormality he exudes is created by his deranged facial expression rather than unnatural makeup. Rhodes compares his dark-haired, clean-shaven look to that used by “Raymond Huntley in the London stage version of *Dracula* in 1927 or Bela Lugosi in the Broadway version that same year, as well as in the 1931 Universal Studios film.”³²² All three versions listed by Rhodes were closely interconnected, so their similarities in design are not coincidental. Neither Orlock nor *Drakula halála*’s delusional Drakula are meant to be “sexually attractive” like Lugosi’s 1931 incarnation.³²³ Orlock’s foreign otherness is a disease, as exemplified by the hoards of plague-bearing rats that he brings with him. Drakula’s illness is mental rather than physical, but his imaginary vampirism leads to his destruction as well. A fatal shot from another patient proves that his fantasies are housed in an all-too-mortal body. Twisted in mind and body, both “vampires” are victimised rather than empowered by their condition, and both embody contagion and atavism.

VII.2. The Monster as Scientist and as Victim of Scientific Progress

The demonisation of science itself in fiction is a recurrent trope, but it bears a particular self-reflexive irony when deployed in cinema. As Christopher Frayling aptly points out, “given the impact of science on cinema in the form of technical innovations (sound film, colour, screen ratios, 3D) that have had aesthetic effects as well (big screens and epics, 3D and horrors, CGI and monsters), it is noteworthy just how much celluloid has been devoted to negative or less-than-positive images of the

³²² Rhodes 25-47.

³²³ Bloom 169.

scientist – and how very influential these images have been.”³²⁴ Nicholas Russell traces negative cultural attitudes to science back to its representations in classic 19th century Gothic works such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus*, Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. He concludes that while scientific experimentation is shown to produce negative results, the overall attitude toward science is ambiguous and that these novels mirror

the ambivalent relationship between reason, progress and good government in so-called Enlightenment thought in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and its antithesis in traditional, aristocratic and reactionary government epitomized by feudalism. The literary expression of the tensions between progress and reaction is the Gothic; in which horror is often associated with science.³²⁵

In fiction, the roles of monster and scientist can intersect as the scientist's unethical and harmful experiments become a vehicle of monstrification. In the cases of Jekyll/Hyde and Frankenstein/Frankenstein's Creature, the monster and the scientist are one. The scientist creates his own double, not through supernatural agency but through scientific experimentation. Implying the perils of seeking forbidden knowledge, the artificially created double becomes malicious and aggressive, directly causing the scientist's destruction. The 1910 Edison adaptation of *Frankenstein* goes so far as to equate science with the occult, showing the formation of the Creature as a mystical process with elements of alchemy. Despite the attention devoted in the novel to descriptions of the Creature and the motivations behind Frankenstein's obsessive research, the moment of creation/animation is not fully covered. Frankenstein studies chemistry at the University of Ingolstadt and

³²⁴ Frayling, *Mad* 43.

³²⁵ Nicholas Russell, "Science and the Gothic: The Three Big Nineteenth-Century Monster Stories," *Communicating Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009) 247–61. 247

admits to an early interest in alchemy and the elixir of life. Delineating his research topics he recounts his study of anatomy and the minutiae of the process of decay in cemeteries and charnel houses. It is in the midst of these investigations that he suddenly “became...capable of bestowing animation upon lifeless matter.”³²⁶ He flatly refuses to elaborate when questioned by Captain Walton, and insists he does not want to make it possible for others to follow in his footsteps. Therefore, the exact mechanics of the process remain shrouded in mystery.

The Edison film expands on the novel’s alchemical suggestions, showing Frankenstein mixing chemicals from different bottles in an immense cauldron. The figure of a complete skeleton in a chair suggests the novel’s dismembered corpses, but it is not used in the experiment. The vat of chemicals is locked into a huge wardrobe with nail-studded doors and a small peephole through which Frankenstein observes the process. This sequence employs many basic effects inherited from the practices of stage illusionists combining them with purely cinematic techniques. Billowing smoke and flames, flashes of light and small-scale explosions are used to indicate a chemical reaction and/or magical transformation. Mixing tradition and innovation, the film uses tools available only to the cinematic medium to elevate these effects to a more impactful level. Tinting is used throughout the sequence to give the flames a mystical appearance and the transformation itself occurs through the aid of reverse projection and stop motion animation. Writhing in the flames, the Creature’s body seems to build itself from the bones outward, forming into a living being before the eyes of the audience. It is seemingly *generated* out of thin air by the vapours rather than *regenerated* from a pre-existing body. The entire process appears

³²⁶ Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, *Frankenstein, or, The Modern Prometheus* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2004) 62.

more occult than scientific and the intertitles indicate that “the evil in Frankenstein’s soul” has created a monster. The fact that the condition of his soul has a direct impact on the physical result endows the process with an even stronger tinge of spirituality, as though science has next to no bearing on the process. The AFI synopsis for *Life Without Soul* shows that it followed a similar path, using phrases such as “the chemistry of life,” “regenerative fluid,” and “evil fluid.” It remains unclear whether the fluid in question is used to *generate* a new being or to *regenerate* one who is dead.³²⁷

Turning the scientific process into a supernatural ritual, both films consequently portray a Creature that is more ape-man or chimera than the product of scholarly investigation and methodical construction, as in the novel. The novel’s descriptions of the Creature are rather vague, using a large number of emotional adjectives that convey a feeling rather than an image that can easily be translated into visual terms. One of Shelley’s most detailed catalogues of the Creature’s physical attributes provides the following insights:

His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful...His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.³²⁸

To Victor’s eyes the Creature grows even more repulsive when he sees it in movement and he expresses his horror in terms evoking the demonic, the uncanny, and the supernatural. He insists that “A mummy again endued with animation could

³²⁷ “Life Without Soul,” *AFI Catalog of Feature Films*, 29 Mar. 2015
<<http://www.afi.com/members/catalog/DetailView.aspx?s=&Movie=16531>>.

³²⁸ Shelley 68.

not be so hideous as that wretch. I had gazed on him while unfinished; he was ugly then; but when those muscles and joints were rendered capable of motion, it became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived.”³²⁹ The symbolic and emotional quality of these descriptions gave filmmakers artistic license to either create a repulsively naturalistic image or an abstractly symbolic one. James A. Heffernan makes an excellent point when he notes that *Frankenstein* adaptations can force “us to face the monster’s physical repulsiveness” in a way the novel never can.³³⁰ The problem with indulging in this kind of explicit visualisation is the potential loss of the story’s underlying message of duality. The Creature is frightening and dangerous, but it is too easy (in a psychological sense) to distance him from the Self by playing up his physically grotesque qualities or by dehumanising him.

1915’s *Life Without Soul* does not present the Creature as deformed at all. There are no indications of the stitching and patchwork involved in his production. He is shown fully dressed in bedraggled but recognisable clothing, drawing out his human rather than animal qualities. His large frame and awkward posture in stills make him appear brutish, but still very obviously human. Judging by the few preserved stills from *Il Mostro Di Frankenstein* (1920), the Creature (Umberto Guarracino) is



Figure 78: One of the few existing images of Umberto Guarracino as the Creature in *Il Mostro Di Frankenstein* (Albertini Film 1920), directed by Eugenio Testa. Lost film. Publicity still from 1920 poster.

³²⁹ Shelley 70.

³³⁰ Heffernan 133-58.

undeformed and unscarred there as well. He is presented as a large, bald, muscular man.

Both the 1915 and 1920 versions appear to lean towards the image of a devolved but human character with a massive silhouette rather than a hybrid creature made of dead bodies or an image of unnatural deformity. He is imposing and powerful rather than disabled or deformed. Frankenstein's desire to create a new, more perfect species of human is contrasted with an image that hints at atavism and brutishness - moving backwards in the evolutionary process rather than forwards.

Edison's *Frankenstein* (1910) entirely eschews the concept of stitching as well, replacing it with a general sense of ungainly disproportion - a compilation of ill-assorted parts. The Creature (Charles Stanton Ogle)'s unwieldy, padded torso and comically exaggerated feet and fingers render his movements clumsy and badly coordinated. This Creature does appear malformed, but mainly above the waist. He has very long fingers with tapered ends and very large feet and there is some suggestion of a hunchback, with massive padding on the torso and back combined with a hunched posture. Ogle's face is coated in white makeup, with his eyes and eyebrows outlined in black. A matted, disheveled mane of hair frames the face. There are no facial prosthetics and the face's twisted aspect is conveyed through expression and grimace. His overall appearance leans towards the grotesque, and the scene in which he peers through the curtains of Frankenstein's bed, lowering over his prostrate form is quite unnerving.



Figure 78: Publicity still of Charles Stanton Ogle as the Creature in *Frankenstein* (Dawley, 1910).

Contradicting the implications of the novel, Ogle's Creature is considerably deformed and misshapen here and there can be no question of his being intended as a paragon of perfection. His final look relates to the film's depiction of the creation process. In the novel, it is a sculptural build-up process. He is assembled out of pre-existing parts that are individually selected and put together with the goal of creating a perfect being. In the Edison film, his materialisation out of a steaming cauldron, suggests a moulding/melding/growth procedure - a more spontaneous process with less controlled results and an unpredictable shape. The element of deliberation that had been present in Victor Frankenstein's original design is here surrendered to

chance, making the whole experiment appear less systematically scientific and more mystical and supernatural.

The Phantom of the Opera's Erik is not primarily a scientist, but Leroux describes him using his advanced engineering skills and theatrical illusionism to support the belief that he is a phantom. His skills become a method for reclaiming the agency lost through his socially reviled appearance; his deficient natural body is empowered through technological trickery. It is curious that early adaptations such as the 1925 Julian/Chaney film avoid revealing the mechanics behind Erik's effects leaving their supernatural potential open to speculation. Again, scientific methodology is concealed behind a veil of superstition.

While the monster is sometimes able to use science as a weapon or an enhancement he can also be victimised by it, illustrating the potential dangers of scientific progress on his own body. Jekyll and Frankenstein fall victim to their own experiments and are punished for their arrogance and their attempts to disrupt the natural order. Their experiments bear obvious spiritual/religious/moral connotations, but even seemingly benevolent medical procedures can be transformed into nightmare scenarios under certain angles.

Reconstructive and cosmetic surgery holds a special place in fictional narratives of science gone awry. Ostensibly a process of healing and rebuilding, it can be twisted to represent a defilement of natural form, a path leading to deliberate disfigurement, loss of identity, and the creation of artificial life. In Maurice Renard's *The Hands of Orlac*, Orlac's wife is haunted by the fear that the surgeries that saved her husband's life have wrought some unnatural transformation in his being. She

finds it difficult to accept that his strange and unfamiliar behaviour “was not the result of something odd about the operation.”³³¹ Rosine even goes so far as to ask Dr. Cerral whether he used any “of the newly-fashionable procedures...nothing from an extraneous source?” during the operation, strongly hinting at a hybridity reminiscent of the experiments described in H.G. Wells’s *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. She imagines Dr. Cerral “carving” her husband’s brain and “drawing off from some bound animal drops of fluid, fragments of cerebral matter which he incorporated into Stephen’s brain....”³³² Despite his reputation for non-traditional medical procedures, Cerral acts shocked and amused she when speaks to him about it and assures her he has done nothing “unnatural”. Rosine admits to being so disconcerted about her husband’s personality shift that “...I’d been on the point of questioning him about our past, so as to be sure it was still him.”³³³

The science of body modification has heavy consequences for Gwynplaine (*The Man Who Laughs*) as well. His face is literally remoulded and turned into a new one. Misuse of medical science robs him of his face and his identity. The origins of Frankenstein’s Creature lie in a similar realm, stemming from Victor Frankenstein’s attempt at perfecting the human race. Transgressing religious and social boundaries, Frankenstein builds an unnatural creation endowing it with artificial life. In fiction, science becomes monstrous when it crosses admissible boundaries.

Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* is a rare example of a monster narrative that depicts science as a triumphant force of good rather than a destructive force of evil. Dracula, a representative of an atavistic supernatural past, is annihilated by the power of rational thought, scientific research and modern technology. Science and technology

³³¹ Renard and White 65.

³³² Renard and White 60.

³³³ Renard and White 69.

are presented as tools of enlightenment and protection. The scientific process itself is not monstified, but the monster suffers its consequences nonetheless. This alternate approach does not find its way into early film adaptations, however.



Figure 79: The deranged Drakula (Paul Askonas) menacing Mary/Mina (Margit Lux) in *Drakula halála* (Lajthay, 1921). Lost film. Publicity still.³³⁴

Lajthay/Askonas's *Drakula halála* (1921) is set in a mental institution but it shows the doctors as completely incapable of subduing and monitoring their malicious patients. The insane Drakula's powers of hypnosis overwhelm all attempts at resistance and most of the film's action occurs in the fantastical realm of his imagination. Basing his account specifically on the film and on Askonas's performance, Páncézl describes Drakula as "a tall, gaunt man with bushy hair and a face that resembled Beelzebub." The horrified Mary complains that "he is staring at me as if I am his prey. He virtually swallows me with his eyes, which are ablaze with all the terrible colours of hell." His smile is "terrible" and his gaze is repeatedly described in flame-related terms such as "wild fire", "blazing", and "deep fiery eyes

³³⁴ Still reprinted in Rhodes.

glowed with dark flames.” His dialogue, as reproduced in the novella and likely taken from the intertitles or original script, is pompous and overwrought. The chain of exclamations he throws at the frightened Mary at their first meeting in the asylum provides a representative sample of his speech patterns: “Death will never come for me! Oh, do not believe that I, too, am mad! I stay here only because I love the living dead. I deeply pity them, and I want to give all of them life!”³³⁵ His dominion over the mind of the innocent young heroine is far stronger than that of the asylum’s medical authority figures. Their rational, scientific influence cannot compete with the otherworldly intensity of the madman. Murnau’s *Nosferatu* (1922) makes almost no reference to science at all. It provides an analogue to the novel’s Dr. Van Helsing in Professor Bulwer, but he is far less instrumental to the plot and is not involved in the death of Dracula/Count Orlock. The vampire is defeated within his own mythological territory, through the performance of an arcane ritual sacrifice described in a book about traditional superstitions.

The monstrification of science in literature - and even more strongly in film - raises the monster to a conceptual level that transcends his physical body. Representing the scientist, the product of scientific experimentation, or even the embodiment of a new scientific idea or theory the monster figure crosses over into abstraction. He is a threat, a warning of the horrors that can ensue when religious faith is replaced with a thirst for forbidden knowledge.

³³⁵ Rhodes 31-47.

Chapter VIII - The De-Monstrification of the Silent Film Monster

Despite all of their differences, silent film literary monsters share one important quality - the ability to evoke sympathy/empathy. According to S.S. Prawer they embody “the monster whose deeds and appearance may terrify, but who is also pitiable and loveable.”³³⁶ In other words, Prawer is here referring to the practice of showing the monster as vulnerable and capable of recognisable human emotions - a highly prevalent approach for silent film monster depictions. The silent film monster is the monster as self rather than as aggressive enemy. He experiences relatable feelings such as loneliness, social alienation, unrequited love and a desire for intimacy.

The mechanism of “de-monstrification” is described by Milly Williamson in her article, “Let Them All In: The Evolution of the ‘Sympathetic Vampire’” (Williamson 2014, 71-92). She raises the question of the de-monstrification of the vampire, who is no longer seen as the Other but as an expression of one’s own alienation. She makes an interesting reference to Sir Francis Varney from *Varney the Vampyre* (1845-1847) as an early version of the non-threatening, suffering vampire in search of intimacy and release from his curse.³³⁷ In Silent Era monster films, filmmakers introduced a range of “de-monstrification” methods that were integrated into every stage of production.

³³⁶ Prawer, *Caligari's Children* 178.

³³⁷ Milly Williamson, “Let Them All In: The Evolution of the ‘Sympathetic Vampire’,” *Screening the Undead: Vampires and Zombies in Film and Television*, ed. Leon Hunt and Sharon Lockyer (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014) 71–92.

VIII.1. Preproduction: Casting the Monster

This process would begin in the pre-production stages with the casting of the monster. Many of the actors cast as monsters in silent film were already known for portraying romantic or heroic characters in other contexts and were frequently younger than the original literary monsters they played. Most also had theatrical backgrounds, with the built-in audiences and aura of ‘seriousness’ that implied. In fact, reputation and previous experience seem to have had a great effect on casting decisions for Silent Era monster roles.

VIII.1.1. Persona and Public Image

There is evidence that alongside previous roles and stage experience, public image may also have been considered in casting decisions. Discussing Albert Basserman’s performance in the Jekyll and Hyde-influenced *Der Andere*, Paul Cowan emphasises the controversial effect of his casting. Basserman was known for his violent aversion to any sort of photography and was “the last stage actor that anyone expected to defect to the cinema.” Cowan alludes to the “legend surrounding Basserman”, known as an eccentric genius with a phobia of publicity who used a coded orthography for his private correspondence.³³⁸

Max Schrek’s performance in *Nosferatu* (1922), while earning great praise from critics, inspired a different sort of sensationalisation. This is possibly due to his relative obscurity to international audiences outside of his role in *Nosferatu*. Writing about the film in 1953, Greek filmmaker and critic Ado Kyrou insists that “the identity of the extraordinary actor whom brilliant make-up renders absolutely

³³⁸ Cowan 82.

unrecognisable” is unknown. He suggests that the name may be a pseudonym and goes on to offer several “guesses” as to the individual it hides, ranging from Murnau himself to an actual vampire.³³⁹ The idea that the part was played by a real vampire is a testament to the quality of Schrek’s acting, and was mockingly explored in the film *Shadow of the Vampire* (2000, directed by E. Elias Merhige). In fact, Schrek’s identity is not a complete mystery and the name does appear to have been his own.



Figure 81: Headshot of actor Max Schrek, devoid of vampiric makeup.

VIII.1.2. Theatrical Background

The actor playing the lead role in silent literary monster films was chosen to match the elevated status of the material itself. In many cases, this elevation was achieved by drawing upon the perceived legitimacy of theatre and utilising popular stage actors. This was a straightforward decision for the 1908 Turner/Bosworth adaptation of *Jekyll and Hyde*, which recorded the Fish and Forepaugh play directly on stage using the sets and costumes employed by the original production. It is likely that the same cast was used as well, including Hobart Bosworth, who was already an established stage actor. Although other adaptations removed the action from the physical stage itself, they did not lose their leaning towards theatre actors. John

³³⁹ Ado Kyrrou, *Le Surréalisme au Cinema* (Paris: Ramsay, 1985) 35.

Barrymore actively pursued his theatrical and cinematic careers simultaneously, playing Richard III on stage while shooting *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* in 1920. Playing the dual role in 1913 and 1920 respectively, Albert Basserman, “the quintessential subtle theatrical actor,” and Conrad Veidt had both worked with Max Reinhardt at the famous Deutsches Theatre in Berlin.³⁴⁰ Simply by casting Basserman, director Max Mack was able to assert the creative legitimacy of his film



Figure 82: Conrad Veidt in Oscar Wilde's *Salome* in the Koniggratzerstrasse, Berlin, 1921. From Getty Images (<http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/>)

and its place within “high culture”. As horror film historian Jonathan Rigby points out, films such as the *Jekyll and Hyde* adaptations were meant to feed “nickelodeon proprietors’ increasing hunger for high-class (and pre-sold) subject matter.”³⁴¹

The versatility required to convey the complexities of Gothic literary monsters called for the casting of actors who had simultaneously shown themselves capable of embodying psychologically complex roles and could appear convincing in a sympathetic or even romantic

context. A number of the actors cast as Jekyll and Hyde in the Silent Era were well-known Shakespearean actors (in non-English-speaking countries as well), especially those known for their interpretations of *Hamlet* and *Richard III*. Experience with period films or other classical literary adaptations was also valued. Hobart Bosworth had appeared in several Jack London adaptations and Alwin Neuss, who played

³⁴⁰ Cowan 82.

³⁴¹ Rigby, *American Gothic* 12.

Jekyll and Hyde twice, had played Sherlock Holmes in a series of films based on *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. King Baggott had already played Sir Wilfred of Ivanhoe in *Ivanhoe* (1913) and Reverend Dimmesdale in *The Scarlet Letter* (1911), before taking on the roles of Jekyll and Hyde in 1913. Thanhouser's James Cruze was frequently cast by the studio in the roles of knights, reincarnated lovers and noblemen, invariably in a literary or historical context. Both before and after starring in the unauthorised *Jekyll and Hyde* adaptation, *Der Januskopf* (1920), Conrad Veidt played a range of darkly romanticised roles in other popular films such as *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919), *The Hands of Orlac* (1924), *The Student of Prague* (1926) and *The Man Who Laughs* (1928). With the exception of *Caligari*, all of the above films were also literary adaptations with Gothic overtones. In this context, the 1920 casting of popular Shakespearean actor and stage and screen lover John Barrymore, with his striking profile and elegant figure, was by no means edgy or surprising.



Figure 80: Publicity photo of John Barrymore as Hamlet in a 1922 production at the Sam H. Harris Theatre, New York.

Nosferatu's Max Schrek worked mainly as a stage actor, appearing in Expressionist productions and Bertolt Brecht plays, eventually joining Max Reinhardt's ensemble at the Deutsches Theatre in Berlin. He occasionally appeared in films, like many prominent members of the ensemble, and worked consistently on both stage and screen until his death in 1936.³⁴² The two central male characters in Jean Epstein's *Chute de la Maison Usher* (1928), Roderick (Jean Debucourt) and the visitor (Charles Lamy) had both appeared in significant roles on stage and screen before being cast in *Usher*. Lamy already had a film career spanning more than 10 years by 1928. The much younger Debucourt had a smaller filmography, but came from a strong theatrical background as both of his parents had been stage actors. His father, Charles le Bargy, had acted with the Comédie Française as well as directing and acting in several early French silent films.³⁴³ Debucourt himself played a range of historical and literary roles and would later make a successful transition into sound film as both actor and narrator. Choosing an experienced actor with an understanding of the film medium, Epstein provided himself with a potential collaborator who could actively contribute to the creation of Roderick's image. Before and after playing Gwynplaine in *Das Grinsende Gesicht* (*The Man Who Laughs*, 1921), Franz Höbbling performed on stage in Austria and Germany in dramatic and operatic productions. He appeared in several opera houses internationally as well as acting in Shakespearean plays such as *Romeo and Juliet* and *Troilus and Cressida*.

Most of the actors portraying Quasimodo or related hunchbacked characters in silent adaptations of Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris* were prominent theatre actors as

³⁴² Skal, *Vampire* 179.

³⁴³ Dayna Oscherwitz and Mary Ellen Higgins, *The A to Z of French Cinema* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009) 239-40.

well, known for Shakespearean and literary roles. Henry Krauss (*Notre Dame de Paris*, 1911) was a successful stage actor and performed various leading roles on screen, including Jean Valjean in a 1912 adaptation of Hugo's *Les Misérables*.³⁴⁴ Frank Keenan (*The Hunchback*, 1909) was known for his roles in Shakespearean tragedies, particularly *Macbeth* and *King Lear*. In general, potential Quasimodos were most frequently drawn from among character actors like Henry Krauss and Lon Chaney, or even screen villains such as Booth Conway (*Esmeralda* 1922), who had played Moriarty in a 1916 *Sherlock Holmes* adaptation. Charles Stanton Ogle, the Creature in Edison's *Frankenstein* (1910), was also a stage actor who appeared mainly in character roles and literary adaptations. He was featured in a number of films after *Frankenstein*, including playing Long John Silver in a 1920 film adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*.

VIII.1.3. Romanticised Type Casting

Almost as important as overall reputation and theatrical experience was an actor's particular capacity for playing romantic and heroic characters. The casting of actors known for their charismatic presence and physical attractiveness in monster roles was not uncommon. This tactic could be seen as an attempt to invite a heightened sympathetic response, promoting understanding and identification (in part even by association with previous roles), rather than fear and disgust.

Stemming perhaps from the precedent set by the Sullivan and Mansfield production, it quickly became conventional for studios to cast their most appealing

³⁴⁴ Abel, *French Film Theory* 135.

lead actors in the dual role of Jekyll/Hyde. This effect was supported by the strong romantic plotline and age shift already built into the fabric of most of the films. It is important to note that while Jekyll and Hyde embody opposing personalities, they are really two parts of one monster. Invariably played by one actor on screen, in cinema they literally shared the same body and all of the implications and associations connected with the actor in question. Although the cinematic Hyde was made even more physically distorted and boorish than in Stevenson, this was counterbalanced by a more aesthetically pleasing and sympathetic Jekyll, tingeing perceptions of both. The American Biography Encyclopaedia's entry on actor Frank Keenan suggests that even the Quasimodo-esque hunchback was not entirely exempt from the romanticised monster trend. Keenan, who played the title role in 1909's *The Hunchback*, is described in the following terms: "His extraordinarily romantic and commanding appearance fitted him admirably for these roles of hero, for he was supple and well built throughout his life, of admirable posture, and well-groomed and wholesome in appearance." The entry goes on to compare his talent and popularity with those of John Barrymore.³⁴⁵

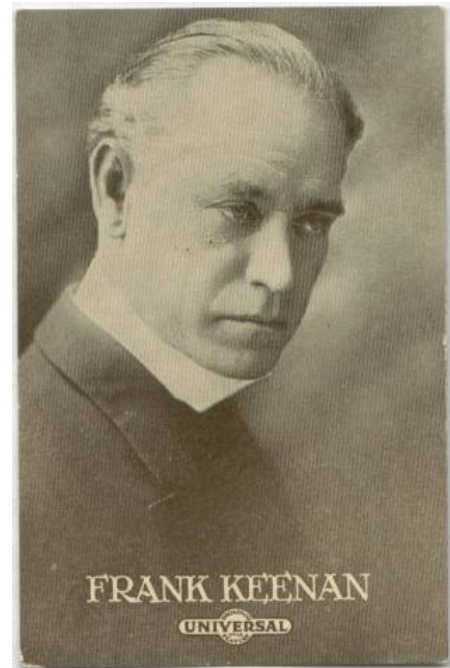


Figure 84: Universal Studios postcard of actor Frank Keenan.

As Denis Gifford has pointed out in relation to Jean Cocteau's *La Belle et la Bête* (1946) it was not unusual to aestheticise and romanticise a monster through casting

³⁴⁵ "Keenan, Frank," *American Biography: A New Cyclopaedia*, 1931 ed. 42-4.

as well as design in silent film and beyond.³⁴⁶ The style of the 1928 adaptation of *The Man Who Laughs* (Leni/Veidt), for instance, was heavily impacted by its last-minute recasting of Gwynplaine. Universal had planned the film as a Lon Chaney vehicle, following in the footsteps of his interpretations of Quasimodo (*The Hunchback of Notre Dame*) in 1923, and Erik (*The Phantom of the Opera*) in 1925. The final decision to cast Veidt due to Chaney's health problems had a transformative impact on the direction of the film and the presentation of Gwynplaine and his double romantic plotline. Ten years older than Veidt, and widely recognised for his chameleon-like transformations and extreme makeup, Chaney's casting would have led to a darker, heavier film, with a more naturalistic approach to Gwynplaine's physicality. Everson refers to Chaney's films as "vehicles in every sense of the word" with such marked parallels in plot and characterisation as to become "interchangeable", and defines his body of work as a series of "cruel, perverse, excessively morbid tales."³⁴⁷ While Everson's assessment is harsh and overly generalised, it does summarise some of the patterns uniting Chaney's monster characters. Both *Hunchback* and *Phantom* (Universal films, like *The Man Who Laughs*), evade the Hollywood penchant for a happy ending for the main character, and isolate the monster from the romantic plotline. Chaney was strongly inclined towards representations of severe physical aberration and mental disturbance and would possibly have brought these features to the fore in Gwynplaine's character.

Veidt, in contrast, restricts and subdues Gwynplaine's disfigurement, insistently downplaying its potentially alienating effect and attempting to make him more relatable, connecting to the literary source through the depth and sophistication of his

³⁴⁶ Denis Gifford, *A Pictorial History of Horror Movies* (London; New York: Hamlyn, 1973) 72.

³⁴⁷ Everson, *Classics* 26.

performance. He approaches Gwynplaine's deformity from a very intimate and functional perspective, not flaunting it demonstratively in an exhibitionist sense, but rather imagining how he would live and function with his face in day-to-day life and what sort of minor habits and ties this might cause him to develop. In Veidt's own words, he allows the character to "possess" him from the inside, informing his movements and behaviour.³⁴⁸ Rather than revelling in Gwynplaine's physical deformity, he focuses on projecting his internal struggle, and noble, loving soul, creating a physical image that is tragic and charismatic rather than frightening or shocking. This interpretation allows the film to make extensive use of the novel's existing romantic story lines without pushing them too far into what may have been perceived as perversion.

VIII.1.4. Age

Another factor that had an important impact on casting decisions seems to have been the actor's biological age, affecting the way the resultant monster resonated emotionally on film. While the cinematic image of Hyde relied heavily on makeup design and level of physical deformity, the physical and psychological presentation of Jekyll was influenced to a surprising degree by the question of age. Stevenson's Jekyll is an experienced, highly educated man of the world, well into his fifties, with a mature, fully developed personality, and fond memories of a turbulent youth. Given this description, it is noteworthy that out of a sample of 19 actors playing Jekyll/Hyde in silent film, only 5 even approach that age range. The average age is

³⁴⁸ Praver, *Caligari's Children* 182-3.

37, the youngest being Harold Lloyd at 22 (in the 1916 parody version *Luke's Double*), and the youngest non-satirical Jekylls still coming in under 30, with Conrad Veidt at 27 and James Cruze at 28.

Such a prolific and insistent age slant strongly suggests a deliberate choice on the part of filmmakers to alter the presentation of the character. Transferring Jekyll to a different age bracket and stage in life endowed him with the impulsiveness of youth and the innocence of inexperience. Director Rouben Mamoulian, choosing his own on-screen Jekyll in 1930, summarised this tendency saying that “rebellion and transformation is more interesting when it is the result of the ferment of youthful aspirations.”³⁴⁹ In these versions, Jekyll’s daring and unethical experiment becomes the release of repressed youthful exuberance and unbridled curiosity rather than the calculated and deliberate desire of a mature man to relive the iniquities of his lost youth without losing his position in society. The mere alteration of Jekyll’s age all but acquits him of his guilt, turning him into a tragic victim of passionate, creative ambition gone awry. In fact, many of the silent films make a point of emphasising Jekyll’s youth, referring to it in the intertitles and introducing a romantic plotline. It is implied that while Jekyll is a fully trained doctor, he is only at the start of his career and still has the recklessness and freedom to indulge in dangerous experiments.

Notre Dame de Paris adaptations display a completely inverse trend. Although presumably, the level of Quasimodo’s bodily and facial distortion make the age and general appearance of the actor portraying him immaterial, it seems that age was a factor in casting decisions. The average age for actors embodying Quasimodo and

³⁴⁹ Skal, *Monster Show* 142.

his hunch-backed silent screen cousins ranged from about forty to fifty years old, although Hugo makes it clear that Quasimodo is approaching his twenty-first year. Narratively, Quasimodo's detachment from society and its norms can render his age less significant as he does not share the same stages of social development as his peers. It can however, widen the emotional gap between Quasimodo and Esmeralda, as he is now not only deformed but old enough to be her father, whereas in the novel he is closer in age to her than any of her other suitors (including Phoebus). The question of age is not emphasised in the intertitles as it is in *Jekyll and Hyde* films, but it can be seen as a subliminal contributor to Quasimodo's detachment from a possible romantic plotline.

Makeup design also worked towards promoting relateability and sometimes reductions in age. Considering the trend of significantly reducing Jekyll's age in film versions, the presence of white or greying hair on several of the Jekylls is curious. This is the only concession made in these films to Jekyll's more advanced literary age. Both Conrad Veidt and King Baggot have one or two silver locks and James Cruze's hair is entirely white. It is especially odd that this list includes two of the youngest on-screen Jekylls and that no effort is made to age their faces or figures. The usual romantic and psychological implications are emphatically present and their obviously un-aged faces are unhesitatingly shown in close-up. It can be assumed that the white hair is employed more as a symbol of accumulated knowledge and a foreshadowing of future suffering than a literal indicator of age. The implications of impulsiveness, inexperience, and emotional vulnerability contributed by the age alteration help to cast Jekyll in a more sympathetic light.

VIII.2. Screenplay: Romantic Subplots

On the scriptwriting level, de-monstrification manifests itself in the emphasis placed on romantic subplots, even if this entails alterations in the storyline of the literary original. In 1923's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, Quasimodo dies of a broken heart when Esmeralda chooses Phoebus (rather than when she is hanged for witchcraft as in the novel). *Phantom of the Opera* (1925)'s Erik is abandoned by Christine, his platonic love interest, who chooses the healthier Raoul. *Phantom of the Violin* (1914)'s Ellis is cast into a suicidal despair when he is betrayed by his beloved wife. Conversely, Conrad Veidt's Gwynplaine in *The Man Who Laughs* (1928) earns an unexpected happy ending by rejecting worldly riches and social affluence in favour of love and family loyalty (instead of drowning himself in despair as in the novel). Jekyll's reduced age in *Jekyll and Hyde* films also entails the presence of a fiancée character absent from Stevenson's novella. Jekyll's relationship with his fiancée/sweetheart is invariably presented as romantic and sincere rather than purely practical, adding a new dynamic to Jekyll's struggle. A confirmed bachelor, Stevenson's Jekyll risks only his own sanity, principles, and reputation by yielding to Hyde's influence. The cinematic Jekyll bears a heavier burden, torn between the trap laid by his ambition and the love of his sweetheart, who hopes to build a life with him. This confused, emotionally insecure young Jekyll gives rise to more dramatically compelling situations, forming a vivid contrast to the ferocious bestiality of Hyde. Cruze's amiably smiling Jekyll presents his fiancée with flowers just minutes before Hyde strangles her father, the local Vicar. Barrymore's elegant, naïve idealist cringes away from the seductive Gina, while Hyde ogles her obscenely and gropes her bare arms. Neuss's 1910 Jekyll, described by contemporary reviews

as “a cultured, charming young man”, morphs jarringly into an ape-like monster who is “hideous physically and debased morally.”³⁵⁰



Figure 81: Jekyll (James Cruze) shares a romantic moment with his sweetheart (Florence La Badie) minutes before murdering her father as Hyde in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Henderson, 1912). Screen grab taken by author.

This emphasis on romance and sentiment does not necessarily preclude the monster from expressing his evil nature. However, a monster who laments his miserable fate but avoids lashing out because of nobler urges is more likely to invite compassion than one who becomes a serial killer out of bitterness. Repentance also goes far towards redeeming at least the monster’s soul - if the monster is a warning, he must also bring a hope for salvation. By inviting the audience to experience the monster’s internal struggle, to justify some of his negative actions by revealing his internal motives, and by portraying the monster’s demise as a tragedy rather than a

³⁵⁰ “Rev. of Den Skaebnesvangre Opfindelse,” *MPW* 24 Sep. 1910: 713.

triumph, a film can create a sense of connection and complicity. Privileged to know more about the inner workings of the monster's mind than the other characters, the viewer may judge less harshly of his behaviour, and see his or her own shortcomings in the monster's fatal flaws. The silent Gothic monster is built on psychological, aesthetic, social and philosophical principles that can be applied to the audience as easily as to the monster, signalling that he is one of us.

Silent Gothic films generally favour a simulation of literary first-person perspective, placing the viewer in the position of the monster rather than the monster's victims, and emphasising his duality by presenting it through his own eyes. This forces us to take into consideration the targets and motives of the monster's violence. Quasimodo's attacks, for instance, are almost exclusively defensive and targeted towards adult male characters, as when he saves Esmeralda from Jehan's advances or defends the besieged cathedral. One of the clearest cinematic barriers to sympathy is the introduction of unprovoked, gratuitous violence. It is very rarely perpetrated by the silent Gothic monster, whose acts of aggression are generally shown as justified or at least accidental.

Later (Sound Era) monsters, including those in literary adaptations, often personify terrorism and invasion entering from the *outside*. The silent monster is terrifying because one cannot defend oneself from him; one cannot hide from him; he comes from *inside* and takes over before one realises it is happening. The fact that he is a part of you, evokes more feelings than basic fear, he can evoke compassion and even affection and understanding. Despite the re-monstrification of the monster in early sound film and his presentation mainly as an external, horrifying threat the

tradition of the internalized silent film monster was not immediately interrupted and its legacy survived in some films until the present day.

The suffering tragic monster of the Silent Era returns again much later in Werner Herzog's 1979 re-make of *Nosferatu*. Herzog himself said that he wanted to endow his vampire with "existential anguish", and "human suffering and solitude". In search of these qualities, he went back to Bram Stoker's original 1897 *Dracula* and to Murnau's film. Herzog's understanding and appreciation of the silent era *Dracula* was manifested through direct references. "I could probably have made a vampire film without the existence of Murnau's film, but there is a certain reverence I tried to pay to his *Nosferatu* and on one or two occasions I even tried to quote him literally by matching the same shots he used in his version."³⁵¹ For Herzog, Murnau's *Nosferatu* was not only a monster film but a strong reflection of the richness of German culture:

For me, *Nosferatu* is the greatest of all German films, and feeling as strongly as I did that I needed to connect to this 'legitimate' German culture in order to find my roots as a filmmaker, I chose to concentrate on Murnau's masterpiece, knowing full well it would be impossible to better the original.³⁵²

Herzog's reflection on Murnau's *Nosferatu* emphasises the originality and uniqueness of the Silent Era monster as the first cinematic embodiment of the Gothic literary monster. Silent film became a testing ground in the search for new representational frameworks. The multifaceted monster created in the "chemical lab" of silent film is deeper and more diverse than many of his later followers, experimenting boldly with methods of cinematic expression, transcending generic boundaries, and communicating in a new language that he was helping to create.

³⁵¹ Werner Herzog and Paul Cronin, *Herzog on Herzog* (London and New York: Faber and Faber, 2002) 155.

³⁵² Herzog and Cronin 152.

Conclusion

This thesis has been devoted to examining the psychological and aesthetic presentation of the monster figure in Silent Era films adapted from nineteenth and early twentieth century Gothic literature, and to provide a definition of the “monster” and “monstrosity” in this context. One of the goals of this research was to compile a corpus of silent films that engaged with a pre-1920 literary work of the Gothic genre featuring a dominant anti-heroic figure as the central character. To this end, I identified sixty-six films, including well-known classics and obscure or lost films, which were analysed on the basis of scripts, film stills, contemporary reviews, posters, interviews, concept art, and other relevant materials preserved in European and American film archives. As a result, I was able to compile the most comprehensive database of silent Gothic literary monster films currently available. Due to space constraints I chose to focus on eight monster figures in my analysis - Jekyll/Hyde from *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson, Quasimodo from *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* by Victor Hugo, Erik from *The Phantom of the Opera* by Gaston Leroux, Dracula from *Dracula* by Bram Stoker, Gwynplaine from *The Man Who Laughs* by Victor Hugo, Frankenstein’s Creature from *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, Roderick Usher and his House from *The Fall of the House of Usher* by Edgar Allan Poe, and Orlac from *The Hands of Orlac* by Maurice Renard.

In Chapter One, I outlined the socio-political and cultural context of the films under discussion, covering such factors as turn-of-the-century advances in psychology, evolutionary theory and eugenics studies, the psychological and cultural impact of World War I, as well as interconnections with contemporary movements in

the visual arts, music, and theatre. Chapter II introduced the eight monster figures chosen for analysis, their literary sources, relevant theories of adaptation, and the corpus of their Silent Era film appearances. Chapter III examined the place of the films under discussion within the broader framework of silent film history and theory, highlighting a group of cinematic techniques that had an especially strong impact in translating these literary monster figures into the language of silent film. The introduction to Chapter IV proposed the need for an original classification of the silent film Gothic monster. The need for a new classification system became apparent as my research showed that these films challenged pre-existing categorisation systems by their multifarious nature. A taxonomy originating in a single discipline cannot fully encompass their multiple aspects and label all the patterns, similarities, and contrasts that define them. I offered a flexible, multi-layered taxonomy that would reflect the complexity and depth of the films under discussion, highlighting the uniqueness of the silent film monster. This new approach to the silent film Gothic monster was explored in detail in Chapters Four-Nine. Each of these chapters combined the preceding analysis and background with an in-depth theoretical examination of one of the major representational patterns exhibited by the silent film monster. This new classification system, based on interrelated patterns, qualities, and themes was used to analyse the following aspects of monstrous representation in silent film: duality/doppelgängers, the monstrous body and its parts and physical and psychological deformity, the monstrification of architectural spaces and landscapes, monstrous hybridity and the fear of science, and “de-monstrification” through the evocation of sympathetic responses. Subsequently, I will offer a brief comparison between the Gothic silent film and its monster figure as

I have presented each, and later and more contemporary manifestations of the cinematic monster. The major differences that this thesis has delineated engage with central questions in the ever-expanding fields of Gothic and Horror Studies.

Among other significant conclusions this thesis and research has demonstrated that

Silent Gothic films generally favour a simulation or cinematic adaptation of literary first-person perspective, in numerous ways placing the viewer in the position of the monster rather than the monster's victims, and emphasising his psychological and spiritual duality by presenting it through his own eyes. Through this approach the films in question function as maps, mental landscapes of the monster's tormented state. There is also a strong tendency to cast much of what the monsters represent in the respective novels and stories - otherness, physical or psychological aberration, foreignness, repressed sexuality, creative individualism, rebellion, transgression of social and class boundaries – in a sympathetic and even admirable light. This corresponds to certain ways in which early silent narrative cinema was already an art form predicated on processes of perceptual and imaginative identification with on-screen figures whether good or evil, physically beautiful or deformed. While silent films retained and through the power of visual images sometimes amplified the physical deformity characteristic of monsters this is partly offset by a monumentalisation and ennobling of the monster figure through all the resources of cinematic technique, which elevate monstrous beings to the level of myths and powerfully expressive symbols for uniquely human emotional, psychological, social and historical conflicts and dualities. Gothic silent films present viewers with internal facing monsters and invite the viewer to identify with their inner struggles. Thus the

general emphasis in silent monster films, partly a legacy of their Gothic literary source material, was quite different from later sound-film representations of monsters characterised by stress on external threat and a greater degree of violence and destruction and a de-psychologised monster whose inner life is unknown or unknowable. This difference aside, clearly later sound films were hugely influenced by some of the films I have examined with various genres and sub-genres paying tribute to the silent film Gothic monster's unique, multi-layered nature. He lent his deformity and monstrous environment to the horror monster, his tormented psyche and duality to the psychological thriller, his mythological origins to the fantasy and science fiction monster, his gestural language to the monsters and villains of action films, etc.

Despite the demonstrable generic diversity of these films, they are traditionally categorised by historians of the horror genre as direct precursors of the monsters of later sound horror films. Many studies of horror film - including histories, catalogues, encyclopaedias, and surveys - either avoid engaging with pre-1930s films altogether or cite them as earlier examples of the horror genre as it is known today.³⁵³ Based on the research presented in this thesis and the themes and characters of the “horror” genre as defined by recent studies, I believe that the relationship between the “Gothic” and “horror” monster in cinema is far more complicated and interesting. Some of the core themes of the “horror” genre as outlined in the above-mentioned studies include: references to traumatic historical events such as World

³⁵³ Some of the resources I consulted on this topic include: Clarens; Everson *Classics*; Frayling *Nightmare*; Rigby *American Gothic and Studies in Terror*; David Baird, *Movie Monsters* (London: MQP, 2005); Ivan Butler, *Horror in the Cinema* (London; New York: Zwemmer ; A.S. Barnes, 1970); Wheeler W Dixon, *A History of Horror* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 2010); Robert Marrero, *Vintage Monster Movies* (London: Robert Hale, 1994); Steven Jay Schneider, ed. *Horror Film and Psychoanalysis: Freud's Worst Nightmare* (Cambridge UP, 2004); Angela M. Smith, *Hideous Progeny: Disability, Eugenics, and Classic Horror Cinema* (New York: Columbia UP, 2011).

War II, the Vietnam War, and the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and related fears of invasion, genocide and nuclear annihilation; biological warfare and environmental disasters brought on by human agency; problems of constructing and expressing national identity; a strong emphasis on serial killer characters and physical violence, particularly “creative” murder techniques and “body horror,” the spectacle of the mutilated human body. The latter type of narrative usually focuses on an “ordinary,” usually female victim who “is subjected to high levels of explicit, sexualised violence.”³⁵⁴ Some of the main areas of research in recent horror studies include questions of monstrosity and adolescence, horror in teen culture; the figures of the vampire and the zombie in film, racism and post-colonialism; and the connection between horror and feminist studies - the monstrous feminine, the woman as monster, the “abject” female body, and the woman as victim.³⁵⁵

In many recent horror films, monstrosity itself is represented by a force, horde, or abstract power (zombies, apocalyptic natural disasters, weapons of mass destruction, etc) rather than by an individual. Additionally, a clear break is often delineated between “bad” or “evil” monsters bent on mindless destruction or delighting in sadistic games, and “good” or “sympathetic” monsters who are openly romanticised

³⁵⁴ Isabel Pinedo, “Recreational Terror: Postmodern Elements of the Contemporary Horror Film,” *Journal of Film and Video* Spring-Summer 1996: 17–31.

³⁵⁵ These topics have been presented at recent interdisciplinary conferences including: *Sensualising Deformity* (held in 2012 at the University of Edinburgh) and the *9th Global Conference on Monsters and the Monstrous* (its proceedings were published in 2013 in Janice Zehentbauer and Eva Gledhill, eds. *Beyond the Monstrous: Reading from the Cultural Imaginary* (Oxfordshire, United Kingdom: Inter-Disciplinary.Net, 2013)); in article anthologies such as Asa Simon Mittman and Peter Dendle, eds. *The Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous* (Farnham, England and Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2012); and other publications such as Adam Lowenstein, *Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film* (New York: Columbia UP, 2005); Andrew Tudor, *Monsters and Mad Scientists: Cultural History of the Horror Movie* (Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, 1989); and many others. The question of the monstrous feminine has been discussed at length by Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (New York: Routledge, 1993); Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia UP, 1982); and Jane M. Ussher, *Managing the Monstrous Feminine: Regulating the Reproductive Body* (London: Routledge, 2006).

and absolved of genuine blame, such as the “vegetarian” vampires of the *Twilight* franchise. In such cases the conflicting qualities of the monster figure are split into different entities instead of being contained within a single, dualistic character. The usually literary-inspired silent film monster is personalised, individualised, and dualistic and the struggle portrayed in these films is between a conflicted being and his own subconscious rather than between a virtuous individual and a horrific event or ravenous crowd. As I have shown in detail in the preceding chapters the themes explored by Silent Era Gothic literary monster films and their treatment of the monster figure diverge strongly from all of these features highlighted by scholars of the horror genre.

Anticipated viewer response (both to the narrative in general and the monster figure in particular) is another facet well worth mentioning in the comparison between the “Gothic” monster of silent film and the “horror” monster established throughout the sound era. While the topic of spectatorial identification is a broad and contentious one, Noel Carroll’s treatment of this issue in the context of “art-horror” can be a useful tool when applied in this context. In *The Philosophy of Horror*, Carroll outlines three possible theories on the ways in which spectators relate to fictional (particularly horror) images. The first, “Illusion Theory” implies a complete suspension of disbelief that allows the spectator to genuinely believe that what they see on screen is really happening. Carroll dismisses this theory as implausible. “Pretend Theory” suggests that the spectator is “playing along” with the fictional narrative and simulating a suitable emotional response (such as cringing in disgust and fear when a character has a body part sawn off on screen). For the third and final mode, “Thought Theory”, Carroll uses the character of Dracula as an example to

illustrate a response in which the *concept* of the monster and his qualities as presented in literature or film evoke thoughts that are in themselves frightening. In Carroll's words, "the thoughts that we are led to entertain involve considering the fearsome and impure properties of monsters. And we are art-horrified."³⁵⁶ The silent film literary monster can be seen as evoking this type of response as he embodies very specific psychological, social, and personal fears that are often far more frightening than the acts or crimes that he is shown to commit. This level of identification (along with Carroll's concept of "art-horror") aligns strongly with Anne Radcliffe's comparison between 'horror' and 'terror' - a more sophisticated psychological response that involves thought and reflection in the creation of fear as well as emotion.

In sum, the difference in the responses invited by the presentation of "Gothic" and "horror" monsters stems from the contrast between an internal battle waged in the mind and an external battle with an unfathomable, predatory stranger; between sympathy evoked through a recognition of flaws in one's self and unreasoning fear caused by the stimulation of one's survival instincts; between a reluctant identification with the monster's deficiencies, forbidden desires and unconventional decisions, and a safe "othering" of the monster as a deviant foreigner or freak whose actions cannot and should not be understood. In these senses, the monster of silent film and the later sound film monsters that he influenced are more closely connected to the principles and representational techniques of their Gothic literary roots than to those of the zombie or deranged serial killer.

³⁵⁶ Carroll, *Philosophy of Horror* 87-8.

In terms of future research on this topic I intend to expand my analysis in several directions. I will devote attention to literature-based monster figures not included in the present research such as Dorian Gray from Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Faust from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust*, William Wilson from Edgar Allan Poe's *William Wilson*, and others. Additionally, I would like to diversify my corpus by including a range of female monster figures. I intend to further explore in more depth and detail some of the questions of identification, duality, and monstrous spaces discussed here. In doing so I will draw on more general and theoretical work in adaptation studies as well. It is my hope that both this thesis and my continuing research in this area of film history and genre and adaption studies will help to establish the silent Gothic literary monster film as a unique and fascinating mode of cinema, occupying a special place in film history.

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Filmography

Film	Year	Studio	Director	Country	Actor
<i>(Unknown)</i>	1897				?
<i>Esmeralda</i>	1905	Societe des Etablissements L. Gaumont	Alice Guy- Blache	France	Henry Vorins
<i>The Hunchback of Notre Dame</i>	1906				
<i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i>	1908	Selig Polyscope Company (William Nicholas Selig)	Otis Turner	United States	Hobart Bosworth
<i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i>	1908	Kalem	Sidney Olcott	United States	Frank Oakes Rose
<i>The Man Who Laughs</i>	1909	Pathe (Albert Capellani)		France	?
<i>The Hunchback (Le Bossu)</i>	1909	Pathe Freres		France	
<i>The Hunchback</i>	1909	Vitagraph	Van Dyke Brooke	United States	Frank Keenan
<i>A Modern Mr. Jekyll</i>	1909	Selig Polyscope	Kenyon	United States	Henry Arthur Barrows
<i>Love of a Hunchback</i>	1910	Empire Film Manufacturing Company/Butcher Films		United Kingdom	?
<i>Hugo the Hunchback</i>	1910	Selig Polyscope Company (William Nicholas Selig)	William Nicholas Selig	United States	?

<i>Frankenstein</i>	1910	Edison Manufacturing Company	J. Searle Dawley	United States	Charles Stanton Ogle
<i>Den Skaebnesvangre Opfindelse</i>	1910	Nordisk Film (Ole Olsen)	August Blom	Denmark	Alwin Neuss
<i>The Duality of Man</i>	1910	Wrench Films		United Kingdom	?
<i>Notre Dame de Paris</i>	1911	Path_Fr_res	Albert Capellani	France	Henri Krauss
<i>Dorian Grays Portraet</i>	1911	Regia Kunstfilms Co.	Axel Strom	Denmark	Valdemar Psilander
<i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i>	1912	Thanhouser Film Corporation	Lucius Henderson	United States	James Cruze
<i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i>	1913	New York Motion Picture/Ideal Film Company	Phillips Smalley	United States	Wallace Reid
<i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i>	1913	Independent Moving Pictures Co. of America (Carl Laemmle)	Herbert Brenon	United States	King Baggot
<i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i>	1913		Charles Urban	United States	Murdoch MacQuarrie
<i>A Modern Jekyll and Hyde</i>	1913	Kalem Company	Robert Broderick	United States	?
<i>Der Student von Prag</i>	1913				Paul Wegener

<i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i>	1913	Kineto Company and/or Natural Colour Kinematograph Company		United Kingdom	
<i>Der Andere (The Other)</i>	1913	Deutsche Vitaskop GmbH	Max Mack	Germany	Albert Basserman
<i>The Phantom of the Violin</i>	1914	Universal	Francis Ford	United States	Francis Ford
<i>Ein Seltsamer Fall</i>	1914	Vitascope GmbH	Max Mack	Germany	Alwin Neuss
<i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde Done to a Frazzle</i>	1914	Crystal Company			Charlie De Forrest
<i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i>	1914	Starlight			
<i>Life Without Soul</i>	1915	Ocean Film Corporation (John I. Dudley)	Joseph W. Smiley	United States	Percy Darrell Standing
<i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i>	1915	Thanhouser Film Corporation	Eugene Moore	United States	Harris Gordon
<i>Portryet Doriana Greya</i>	1915	Thiemann & Reinhardt	Vsevolod Meyerhold	Russia	Varvara Yanova
<i>Horrible Hyde</i>	1915	Lubin Manufacturing Company	Howard Hansell	United States	Jerold T. Hevener
<i>Miss Jekyll and Madame Hyde</i>	1915	Vitagraph	Charles L. Gaskill	United States	Helen Gardner
<i>The Phantom of the Opera</i>	1916			Germany	?

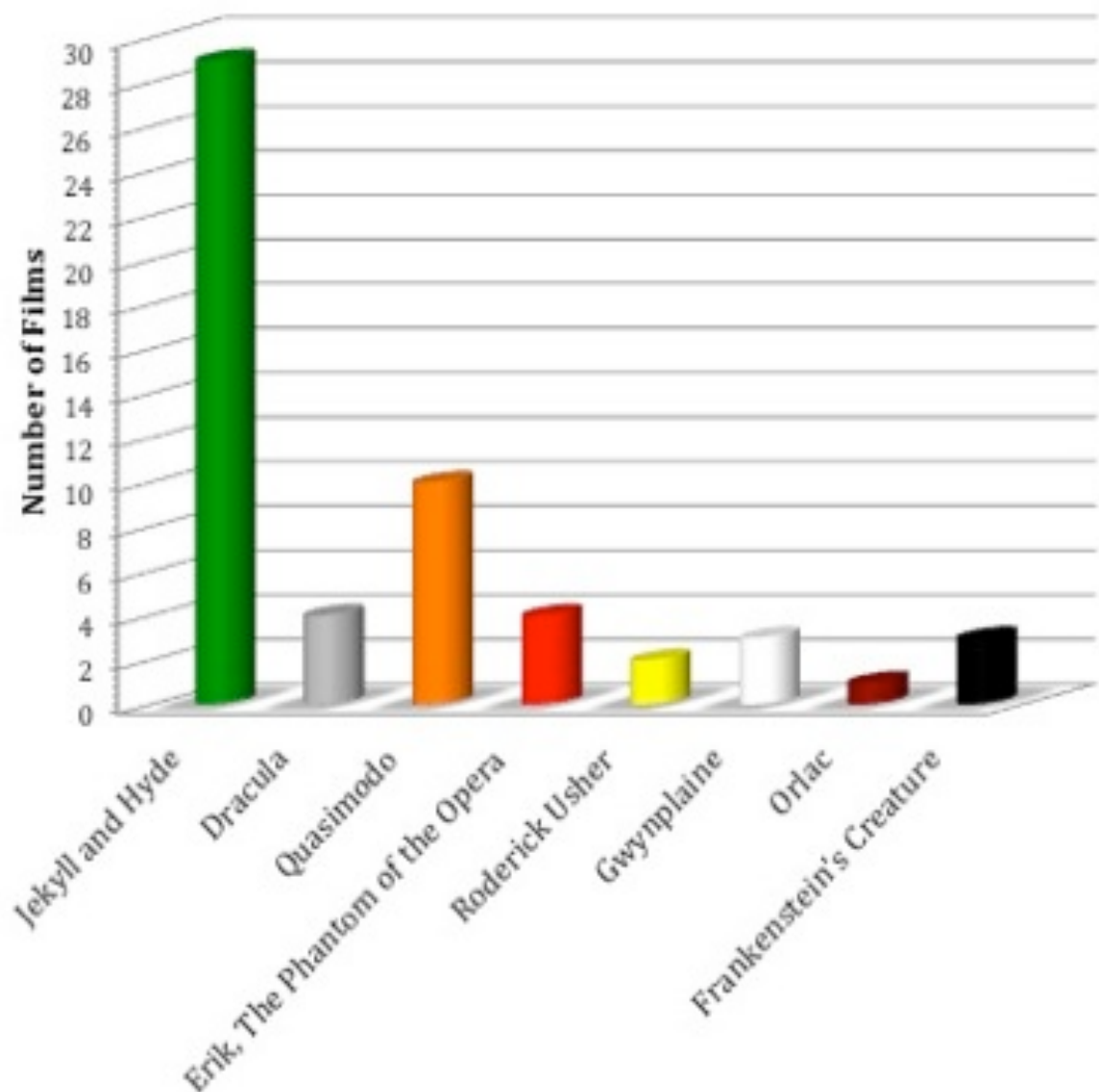
<i>Das Phantom der Oper or Das Gespenst im Opernhaus</i>	1916	Greenbaum-Film	Ernst Matray	Germany	Nils Olaf Chrisander
<i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i>	1916	Barker-Neptune	Fred W. Durrant	United States	Henry Victor
<i>Luke's Double</i>	1916	Pathé-Phonofilm		United States	Harold Lloyd
<i>The Darling of Paris</i>	1917	Fox Film Corporation (William Fox)	J. Gordon Edwards	United States	Glen White
<i>Das Bildnis des Dorian Gray</i>	1917	Richard-Oswald-Produktion (Richard Oswald)	Richard Oswald	Germany	Bernd Aldor
<i>Dr. Jekyll</i>	1917				?
<i>Az Elet Kiralya</i>	1918	Star-film	Alfred De_sy	Hungary	Norbert Dan
<i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i>	1920	Famous Players-Lasky Corporation, Paramount Pictures (Adolph Zukor)	John S. Robertson	United States	John Barrymore
<i>The Twelfth Hour</i>	1920		F.W. Murnau	Germany	Alfred Abel
<i>Drakula</i>	1920			Russia	?
<i>Il Mostro Di Frankenstein</i>	1920	Albertini Film (Luciano Albertini)	Eugenio Testa	Italy	Umberto Guarracino
<i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i>	1920	Hank Mann Comedies (Morris R. Schlank)/Arrow Film Corp.		United States	Hank Mann

<i>When Quackel Did Hide</i>	1920	Gold Seal Corporation/Aywon comedy	Charles Gramlich	United States	Charles Gramlich
<i>Der Januskopf</i>	1920	Lipow-Film, Decla-Bioscop AG (Erich Pommer)	Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau	Germany	Conrad Veidt
<i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i>	1920	Pioneer Film Corporation	Charles J. Hayden	United States	Sheldon Lewis
<i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Zip/ Happy Hooligan in Dr Jekyll and Mr Zip</i>	1920	International Film Service (William Randolph Hearst)	Ben Sharpsteen or Gregory La Cava	United States	Happy Hooligan
<i>Jekyll and Hyde Comedy</i>	1920			United States	
<i>Das Grinsende Gesicht (The Grinning Face)</i>	1921	Olympic Films	Julius Herzka	Germany	Franz Hobling
<i>Dracula's Death (Drakula halála)</i>	1921		Karoly Lajthay	Hungary	Paul Askonas
<i>Esmeralda</i>	1922	Master	Edwin J. Collins	United Kingdom	Booth Conway
<i>Nosferatu: eine Symphonie des Grauens (Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror)</i>	1922	Jofa-Atelier Berlin-Johannisthal, Prana-Film GmbH (Enrico Dieckmann, Albin Grau)	Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau	Germany	Max Schrek
<i>The Hunchback of Notre Dame</i>	1923	Universal (Carl Laemmle, Irving Thalberg)	Wallace Worsley	United States	Lon Chaney

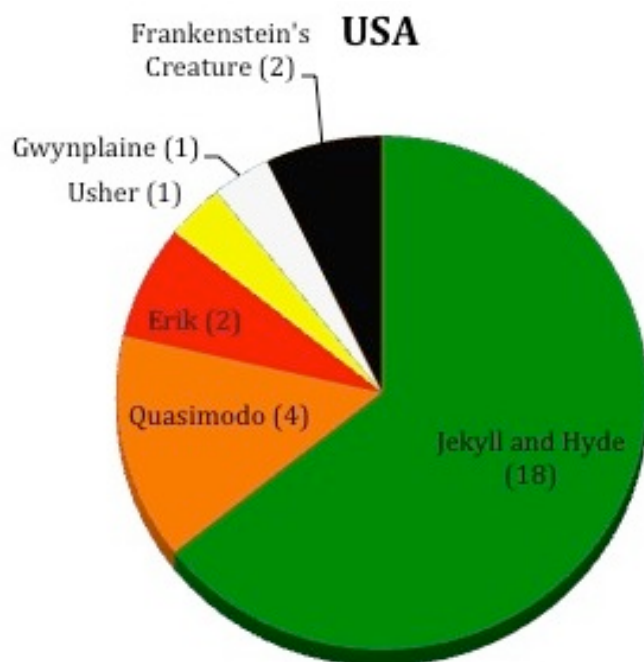
<i>Orlacs Hande</i>	1924	Berolina Film GmbH, Pan Films	Robert Wiene	Germany	Conrad Veidt
<i>The Phantom of the Opera</i>	1925	Universal (Carl Laemmle)	Rupert Julian	United States	Lon Chaney
<i>Dr. Pyckle and Mr. Pride</i>	1925	Joe Rock Comedies, Standard Photoplay Company (Joe Rock), Pathe Comedy	Joe Rock, Percy Pembroke	United States	Stan Laurel
<i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i>	1925	Standard Photoplay Company		United States	?
<i>Faust</i>	1926	UFA (Erich Pommer)	Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau	Germany	Gosta Ekman
<i>Der Student von Prag</i>	1926				Conrad Veidt
<i>The Man Who Laughs</i>	1928	Universal (Paul Kohner)	Paul Leni	United States	Conrad Veidt
<i>La chute de la maison Usher</i>	1928	Films Jean Epstein	Jean Epstein	France	Jean Debucourt
<i>The Fall of the House of Usher</i>	1928	MGM	James Sibley Watson, Melville Webber	United States	Herbert Stern
<i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i>	1929	Ardelle Studios production			Sheldon Lewis

Appendix – Charts

Appearances of Gothic Monster Characters in Films Internationally (1897-1929)



Film Appearances By Region (1897-1929)



Germany

